Nation

Volume 12, No. 07 • February 18, 2005

Residential School Issue

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One More River

Screening: February 19th at 4:20 pm at the Cinémathèque Québécoise 335 De Maisonneuve East in Montreal

Filmmakers Neil Diamond and Tracey Deer travel deep into James Bay to gauge the Cree response to the controversial Paix des Braves.

Check out the March 18th issue of *The Nation* for more about **One More River**.

One More River makes its TV debut on APTN, airing in two parts, at 7:00 pm, March 26, and 7:00 pm, April 2.

Heavy Metal

Screening: February 21st at 8:00 pm at the NFB Cinema 1564 St. Denis St. in Montreal

A documentary about minining contamination in Cree territory and how a Cree environmental officer joins forces with an American geologist to expose an unacknowledged environmental and public health crisis. Broadcast date to be announced.

photo courtesy of Chisasibi Cultural Department

Native PRIDE

By Steve Bonspiel

A Native prophecy once said that our people would suffer unimaginably for a period of six generations. That we would see our land and our spirit stolen from us and that some of the original peoples of this earth would perish forever.

It also said that only when the seventh generation was born and made its way in the world would we truly start to get back to our ways, take back our identity and culture and ensure the survival of our languages for generations to come.

The sixth generation, often referred to as the lost generation, is the last one to have undergone terrible injustices and abuse in residential schools. As if what has been done to Native people over the years wasn't enough, this generation had to suffer as bad or worse than any others in order for us to get back on our feet again. When you've been broken and beaten down to almost nothing, there is nowhere to go but up.

During that time something called the 60s scoop was happening in our communities. Indian Agents were swiftly and unjustly snatching our kids who were in turn being adopted by white families. Children were flown out to different cities and towns across the country to satisfy the appetite of those people who wanted a Native kid, but wanted to "civilize" them and break any ties to their language and culture.

Only now are some of those displaced individuals finding their way back into the Native fold. Many never will because they bought into their parent's view of being inferior because they were Native. Their only salvation was learning the white man's way and thinking like one.

As a Mohawk, a different divide-and-conquer tactic was introduced in the last 20 years – blood quantum. In Kahnawake, judging who is a Mohawk and who is not by their blood was a tactic bestowed upon us by the government to confuse and divide us – and is working almost perfectly.

The residential school era was the final nail in the let's-assimilate-the-Indians coffin, one that will live on in each and every one of us for many many years. Even if my generation has never set foot into the cavernous buildings where souls came to die, some of those who have experienced it first hand are inadvertently passing the damage done onto us.

However, despite the harm that residential schools have caused us, there are many reasons to hold our heads up, especially within the Cree Nation.

Successful people like San Jose Sharks forward Jonathan Cheechoo, Dr. Darlene Kitty, motorcycle and snowmobile racing phenoms Katejun Coonishish and Jeremiah Capissisit are all examples of Crees whose inspiration and determination brought them to where they are today. The emotional and financial support of their families enabled them to grow into role models for the whole Nation.

We should keep our chins up, there are brighter days ahead and it begins with each individual. If we continue to pity ourselves and blame other people for the dreary situation we live in, nothing will change.

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Residential School Survivor Paul Dixon
Photo: S. Bonspiel
Design: M. Laviolette

rez notes

My experience with RSS

Sonny Orr

I know many people, who I consider to be good friends from childhood, who went through the residential school system. I, on the other hand, lived a privileged life alongside the system for many years. I grew up with those who had to live that life in the system and often knew no others I could call friends. I roamed the halls of Moose Fort and St. Phillips, free to do whatever I wished or could think of. But I was a student, just like the others from village or coast and attended St. Phillips (academically and spiritually) and eventually we all had to take French class from Grade 4 on, until the Cree School Board came along and had established a hostel service locally, ending an era of arbitrary education and administration.

Moose Factory and Fort George, being the closest residential schools to our communities, still was a long way off for those who were in the system for more than a few years, whereas for the four year olds, it was an experience of complete confusion and terror. We were (un)fortunate enough to have two residential schools in our town, which created a strong sense of competition between French and English-speaking (in reality it was Cree versus Cree) hockey teams, for example.

We all knew who got the strap from the principal and all students had to bear with having their slingshot taken away and torn in half. Smuggling slingshots and keeping a double life, for those who came from Fort George, was common, but not for those who were in the residence. Punishment was doled out with a strap, but it really wasn't that much different for the residential schools for white kids, where the strap was applied with enthusiasm, for the sake of instilling character. I nearly got the strap once after annihilating the class with a fire extinguisher just before recess in Grade 4, but I sweet talked my way out of it in the end.

I suppose that the mindset of these types of schools, where every one looked the same and everything was strictly enforced, and being very regimental and indifferent to whom receives the orders to wash the toilets, is a carry over from the all-boys schools or orphanage type of European education and upbringing. It was the perfect type of school system to mould a malleable nation. We, being strong and stout, persevered as a nation to overcome obstacles. To this day, however, I doubt that without the access to another culture and learning how it works and what it could do a nation, was part of the precursor to our success today as Eeyou in Eeyou Istchee.

After looking back at the system, I have to admit that there were some damn good teachers who taught in our classes. It isn't every school that you have master mathematicians, great guys with a PhD in genetics, another PhD in biology, a masters in English, masters in history, free thinking art teacher, an MBA, multi-language linguists for French, master carpenters for shop, an expert in phonetics, winemaking and communications, an ex-wrestler, not one but two all round (and well revered) all star athletes (one who turned down a chance to be the first white guy on the Harlem Globetrotters), all teachers crammed into the school we attended. Of course at the same time, they crammed a lot into our noggins, vital information that we still subconsciously retain and leaving a sense of strong teamwork and leadership as the result. I cannot say that I did not learn from that educational experience.

the Nation is published every two weeks by Beesum Communications

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SUBSCRIPTIONS
INDIVIDUALS & INSTITUTIONS: $45
ABROAD: INDIVIDUALS: $70 U.S.
ABROAD: INSTITUTIONS: $85 U.S.
PAYABLE TO BEESUM COMMUNICATIONS

PRINTED BY PAYETTE & SIMMS

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PUBLICATION MAIL #40015005
ISSN #1206-2642
The *Nation* IS A MEMBER OF:
THE JAMES BAY CREE COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY,
CIRCLE OF ABORIGINAL
CONTROLLED PUBLISHERS, CANADIAN
MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS ASSN,
QUEBEC COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER ASSN,
CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS' ASSN
LES HEBDOS SÉLECT DU QUÉBEC

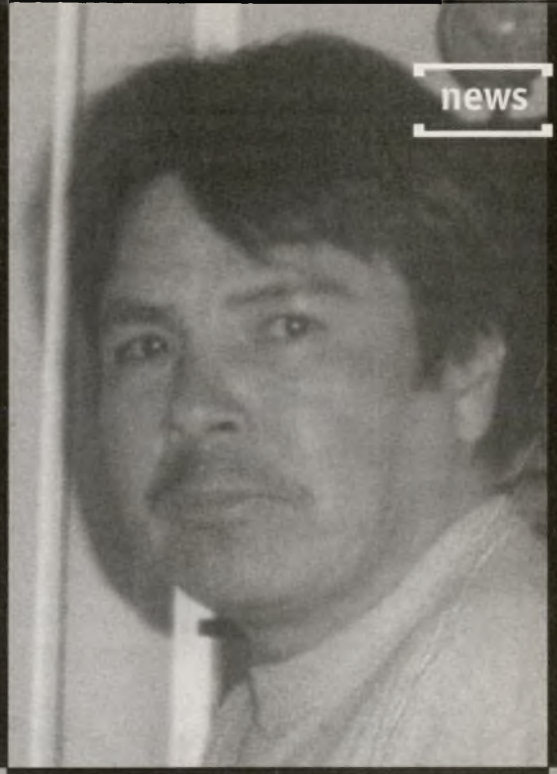
We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Magazine Fund toward our editorial costs.

Canada

FAMILY GRIEVES OVER WASWANIPI MAN'S MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

Haven't heard from him in more than two months, fear the worst

By Steve Bonspiel



Andrew Shecapio, who was last seen Nov. 25, 2004

photo courtesy of Elizabeth Bosum

A Waswanipi family's hope to see their loved one is slowly waning now that a full two months have passed since Andrew Shecapio was last seen.

A prospector and father of two children, he was last seen November 25 at a bar in Villebois, 30 kilometres from Lasarre.

According to Elizabeth Bosum, his wife of 10 years, he left November 15 to go to work for Geosig in Villebois, about 2-3 hours from his home in Val d'Or. It's a job he's had off and on for around 20 years.

She received a call from his boss two days after his last appearance, wondering why he didn't come into work. That's when alarm bells went off in her head.

"He never misses work when he's away, so I found it strange that he didn't come in," she said. "The last transaction with his bank card was when he bought a six pack and took out extra money for a cab." Shecapio even told the taxi driver to come back and pick him up that night after the bar closed, but he was no longer there when the taxi arrived, according to the driver.

Police investigators said that his bank card has not been used since then and he has not contacted his boss for his last paycheck. They told the family that they'd have to wait till the snow melts to find him.

"The kids are used to him being gone for awhile, but when he was gone longer than usual, they started to suspect something," said Bosum, who didn't tell her two children Shahone, 10, and Shania, 8, until two weeks after she found out he was missing.

"He told the kids that he'd be back in 14 days and he would bring Christmas presents for them. They asked me about it and I said that daddy got lost. They go to the window every night and look to see if he's coming. My oldest told me that she cries in the bathroom and the youngest is saying that he's never coming back because if he were around he'd at least call or send us letters."

> **"Shania wanted to know how he could get lost because he was a big man. She thought only kids could get lost."**

Bosum says she didn't know what to tell her.

"Shania wanted to know how he could get lost because he was a big man. She thought only kids could get lost," said Bosum.

"He used to play with my oldest daughter on the Playstation. The other day she went to play and came back to me and said, 'It's not the same without daddy, I don't want to play if daddy's not here.'"

continued on page 7

***** NOTICE OF COMMUNITY TOUR *****
Cree School Board

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Chairman of the Cree School Board, Mr. William Mianscum will be conducting a community tour on education during the months of February and March 2005.

The purpose of this tour is to give information to the Cree Nation on issues that affect the overall success in our schools. We will give the public our three-year pedagogical plans, some statistics that show success rates, absenteeism and other information that will stimulate and seek them to support the changes needed in our schools. The School Board is moving to improve the situations that cast a shadow in our academic performances in our schools.

We would like to seek support for measures we propose as a School Board to enhance the overall success rate in our schools.

We encourage you the parents/guardians, teachers to come and listen on issues related to Cree education.

The following is the schedule for the tour:

Chisasibi	February 7th and 8th
Whapmagoostui	February 9th and 10th
Wemindji	February 21st and 22nd
Eastmain	February 23rd and 24th
Waskaganish	March 7th and 8th
Nemaska	March 9th and 10th
Waswanipi	March 14th and 15th
Ouje-Bougoumou	March 16th and 17th
Mistissini	March 29th and 30th

For more information, please contact the Cree School Board head office at (418) 923-2764 or your local school administration.

continued from page 5

Bosum said that one of the hardest things to deal with since her husband's disappearance has been the rumours. "I can't believe what the people were saying. Some said he's with another woman, others said that Andrew was hit by an 18-wheeler. My kids were told at school that they were replaced by another family. It was tough for me to hear that and I told my daughters not to believe it. It was just people trying to make us mad," she fumed.

"I cry a lot at night when I think about him. I try to tell myself that he's coming home.

Even though it's been over two months, Bosum is holding out hope. "I think he's lost in the bush, maybe something happened to him that night and he wandered into the bush," she said, adding that he has a bad temper when he's drinking and has gotten into fights because of his sharp tongue.

The family checked the jails in Ontario and Quebec and the hospitals in the surrounding area where he was last seen, soon after the phone call from his boss and came up empty.

Shecapio Family

photo courtesy of Elizabeth Bosum

"My sister-in-law and I went down to Lasarre to look for him and no one knew him. Some of the people in the bar said they saw him that night, but didn't see where he went after."

The family's financial outlook is bleak. Bosum currently has no income, and has had to apply for welfare, which she says could take months before she receives her first check. "My rent is due and I can't pay it. My daughter needs new glasses and I can't even afford it."

Ouje-Bougoumou, where Bosum is from, and Shecapio's home community of Waswanipi have both sent money to help out, but it's not enough.

She can't even receive her husband's last paycheck because his boss needs his signature on the time sheet.

His sister Vadney has been relentlessly helping to find her brother. She says she was bugging police to start searching, but they had to wait a certain time period before treating the case as a missing persons file.

"We went to go see where he was staying and his bags were all packed," she said. "We asked around from Lasarre to Timmins and put up posters all over."

"I think something bad happened to him. He wouldn't take off on his kids like that, especially just before Christmas."

His wife is hoping for some kind of a sign. "I cry a lot at night when I think about him. I try to tell myself that he's coming home. He should have been home by now."

Donations to Andrew Shecapio's family can be sent to:

Elizabeth Bosum

863 Abitibi, Val d'Or QC J9P 2C2

Waswanipi man murdered in Montreal

A 33-year-old Waswanipi man was attacked and killed in downtown Montreal after leaving a bar with a friend early in the morning of February 2.

photo courtesy of Montreal Police

Jerry Stafford Happyjack had been drinking with a friend when he was attacked by three men. Ambulance attendants treated Happyjack for knife wounds to the neck and transported him to hospital. He died four hours later.

"As of this moment we are looking for three suspects. We can't say much more than that," Montreal Police Constable Miguel Alston told *the Nation*.

Investigators from the major crimes division are interviewing people who were at the corner of Fort and Tupper streets when it happened.

Non-natives living in James Bay to benefit from EM-1

If the proposed hydroelectric project Eastmain-1A passes the environmental assessment phase, non-natives in Eeyou Istchee stand to gain $310 million.

Quebec Premier Jean Charest

Cree Nation of Nemaska
1 lakeshore Road, Nemaska, Qc J0Y 3B0

S.E.B.J. - Saviour of the Nemaska Minor Hockey & Broomball Tournament

The Cree Nation of Nemaska would like to express a debt of gratitude to Le Société d'Énergie de la Baie-James for their assistance with the Nemaska Minor Hockey and Broomball Tournament held in Nemaska this past January 21st - 23rd, 2005. Murphy's law somehow managed to find its way into the friendly confines of the arena complex and a technical malfunction put our beloved Zamboni in the penalty box. All hope of continuing with the tournament seemed lost.

Grieving parents and teary-eyed youth silenced the roar and passion of our glorious game. However, as sure as the geese fly south for the winter so did the new Zamboni that magically made its way down here from EM-1. Our Director of Operations was instrumental in negotiating with S.E.B.J. for the use of their one and only EM-1 Zamboni for the duration of the Nemaska Minor Tournament.

With the arrival of the much-anticipated EM-1 Zamboni, came a shiny new sheet of glimmering ice on which both young and semi old could now show their best for the eagerly awaiting crowd. The games continued on well into the cold crisp night and the tournament was completed the following day without further intervention of Murphy's Law. Our Zamboni from EM-1 was now given the prestigious name of NEM-1.

So ladies and gentleman, that's the true inside story of the Nemaska Minor Hockey and Broomball Tournament. This proves that when both Cree and SEBJ work together for something we all cherish, our precious youth, miracles do happen.

From all of us in Nemaska, we would like to say thank you to Serge Caron and the Recreation Department of SEBJ at EM-1 for your technical support and collaboration in making this event a success. Meegwetch!!!

Written by an appreciative hockey fan.

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announced a 50-year economic development fund for the Municipality of James Bay January 28.

The fund would kick in if the province begins construction on the dam. The money is intended to help the 16,000 Quebecois residents of the region.

Charest also said Quebec "favours" energy exports to the United States. But he cautioned that significant increases in electricity exports won't develop until at least 2011.

The $4 billion Eastmain project is scheduled for completion in 2010 and will require the diversion of the Rupert River.

Waswanipi Chief and council avoid early elections - Missed quorum at recall meeting blamed on timing

Some Waswanipi residents thought they'd see a changing of the political guard February 4 in a special general meeting called to address demands for early elections. Six hundred people were needed to set the quorum at the meeting. But because all that could be mustered was a meagre 150, Chief Robert Kitchen and his council can serve out the rest of their terms.

"Obviously I'm really disappointed," said Irene Neeposh, one of the people hoping for a free vote before the next elections. "It wasn't very well handled. They [the band council] weren't open to it and I'm disappointed in the Cree-Naskapi Commission, which was supposed to get in touch with me to let me know if someone was coming but they never called me back."

Neeposh added that if someone was present from the committee, they might have been able to make a ruling whether to reschedule the meeting or not.

"It seems to me like they're just there to read the act to people who want to know about it, but not to intervene," she said.

Brian Shawana, Director of the Cree-Naskapi Commission, told the Nation that he tried to get a hold of Neeposh on her cell phone, but it was off. "In any case, the Cree-Naskapi Commission does not have the power to intervene in local level elections," he said.

Even if they attended the meeting, they wouldn't have been able to do anything about the outcome, Shawana said.

"To me it just validated that the people aren't being listened to," said Neeposh. "The band council refused to move the meeting to a later date. There was also a funeral and some of the people I spoke to said that there was no way they were going to go to a political gathering when there were two recent deaths in the community."

One of the deaths was Kitchen's brother, Sam, who passed away February 2.

Now the people who oppose Kitchen will have to wait at least another year before they can bring it up again, according to John Jolly, the Assistant Returning Officer. "Although I don't think it will happen now because the election is next summer," Jolly said.

Chief Kitchen could not be reached for comment.

Waswanipi 16th Annual Minor Hockey & Broomball Tournament February 3-6th, 2005

Pre-Novice Hockey
Champions:
Waswanipi Lil' Huskies 4
Finalists:
Mistissini 2

Benjamin Broomball
Champions:
Waswanipi 1
Finalists:
Lac Simon 0

Novice Hockey
Champions:
Mistissini Rockets 5
Finalists:
Waskaganish 4

Novice Broomball
Champions:
Opitciwan 1
Finalists:
Waswanipi 0

Cadet Broomball
Champions:
Waswanipi 3 O.T.
Finalists:
Lac Simon 2

Atom Hockey
Champions:
Mistissini Beavers 3
Finalists:
Waswanipi 1

Peewee Hockey
Champions:
Waswanipi 2
Finalists:
Mistissini 1

Bantam Hockey
Champions:
Waswanipi 6
Finalists:
Lac Simon 1

Midget/Juvenile Broomball
Champions:
Waswanipi 4
Finalists:
Lac Simon 0

Photo: Nation Archives

photo by Steve Bonspiel

Residential School – ONE MAN'S STORY

By Steve Bonspiel

Some people know Paul Dixon as a Cree hunter and trapper. Others know him as a family man and protector of Cree rights. In this article we will talk about another aspect of the man – as a residential school survivor.

"I remember getting on the bus the first time we were taken to the Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford, Ontario," Dixon, 48, told the *Nation*. "I was six years old and had no idea where we were headed. Some of the kids only had an apple or a sandwich for the 24-hour journey. We were hungry, and some kids were crying; it was very sad right from the beginning."

Paul and each of his six siblings eventually ended up at a residential school far away from their home. Some went to Brantford, others to La Tuque Indian Residential School. Paul was the only one in his family who went to both.

"My father was told by the Indian Agent that their welfare and family allowance would be cut off if he didn't allow his children to go. He was also coerced into sending us to learn the white man's way when he was told by the Indian Agent that if he didn't, we would have no future as there are many things the white man knows that could not be taught at home," he said.

"As the bus was rolling along the highway on the road to nowhere, I saw these two moose on the side of the road. They stared at us as if to say goodbye. They knew that part of us; a part of who we were as Crees was never going to return."

The year was 1963 and Indian residential schools were a central assimilation tool of church and state. The Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford was run by the Anglicans.

"It was very frightening when we finally arrived. None of us had ever been that far and we were all scared. We were just little kids and we were taken away from our traditional lands."

It wasn't long before he realized how awful the school was.

"I saw a lot of things at the school. I won't mention any names, but one time I saw this guy dragged out of bed totally naked and thrown in the shower," he said. "There were times when some of the older boys forced the younger ones to do things to them sexually. I saw that happen many times. I didn't understand any of it and I'm still very angry when I remember those times. Nothing could have prepared us or any Indian child for what was going to happen to us in those years," he said.

"We were torn away from our parents and brought to these stone cold buildings at such a young age."

Family life was non-existent at the school. Older siblings were separated from younger ones and put in different dormitories. The only time Paul saw his brothers or sisters was when they came home after the school year was over. Because of that separation, they grew further and further apart as the years went by. "I didn't grow up with my parents and it was the same for most people from my generation. We have social problems and other nega-

tive aspects in the community and it makes me very angry knowing that it might have been different if we weren't taken away from our parents and forced into residential schools."

Learning to survive in the school was hard. There was nowhere to turn to when things went bad. No one to talk to, no shoulder to lean on.

"The only time i told my mother I loved her was on her deathbed, which is something I regret to this day,"

"I learned in residential school to love and trust nobody. That's what they taught me by how we were treated. The only time I told my mother I loved her was on her deathbed, which is something I regret to this day," said Paul, who moved on to La Tuque Indian Residential School when he was 12.

"When you go through something like that you become very scared of intimacy and sharing your feelings."

Dixon has never received an apology for the trauma he suffered. "Neither has anyone else in Waswanipi and I fear that we never will," he said as he mentioned that two residential school survivors, Annie Blacksmith and Sam Kitchen, have passed away in the last few weeks.

In a unanimous decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal last December, the class action lawsuit on behalf of all survivors of the Mohawk Institute Residential School was certified. This means that it can proceed through the courts, but may take many years before any financial compensation is awarded. In the meantime, more survivors pass away every year. Some are in their early 80s now.

Physical, sexual and mental abuse was rampant throughout the school.

"I didn't know right from wrong as far as sexual abuse. How was I supposed to know what an adult can and cannot do to me as a child? Keys were thrown at us, we were beaten with thick black straps along with fists," he said

Dixon admits that he has never sought out professional help, preferring instead to deal with the pain himself.

"There are many things I don't want to mention. A lot of people from Waswanipi went there [to Brantford] and some people just want to forget.

"I broke my glasses one time and I got a beating for it. From then on I had to make sure I didn't break them again because I didn't want to be punished like that, even though I knew I didn't do anything wrong."

Abuse didn't only come from the teachers. Paul was given a nickname by the students that to this day he cannot stand to say what it was because it hurts so much. He only wishes that he could forget it.

"Even if I had my moccasins kissed by the Pope and the Queen, I would never forgive and definitely not forget."

There were instances that Paul witnessed where one kid would vomit and force another kid to eat it because they didn't want to get in trouble.

The federal government issued an apology in the Montreal *Gazette* a few years back, but he didn't think it meant very much since it was a mass apology, not something directed at him or the other survivors.

"Even if I had my moccasins kissed by the Pope and the Queen, I would never forgive and definitely not forget."

Many Native people across Canada had their language beaten out of them in these schools. Paul was lucky that his family spoke to him in Cree and whatever he forgot while at the school he quickly relearned over the summer. Otherwise, he might have ended up like many Native people who lost a part of themselves forever.

When he turned 14, he hid in the bush when the school bus came around. He didn't want to go back to the place where his innocence and his feeling of self worth were stripped from him. Luckily he succeeded in eluding the Indian Agent and his father began to teach him how to be a Cree again. He had to learn how to use snowshoes and to hunt. That was when he started to realize what those years away from home had done to him and his traditional knowledge.

"It's hard for me to talk about what happened to myself in there. It's a comfort to me to know that the guy who did some things to me is no longer on this earth. It's a small thing but knowing that he can no longer mention what he did to me and others, or do it to anyone; somehow that makes me feel a little better."

The effects of the residential schools are still being felt today.

"I can't fully understand my younger siblings because they were sent to the French side of La Tuque and I don't speak French. They don't speak English as well as I do but we have one thing in common and that's our mother tongue.

"My mother and father were victims of the residential school era as well, not because they went there but because their children were stolen from them. One day my father surprised me and said, 'What did you expect me to do?' He was threatened with going to jail if he stopped us from going."

Paul has been with the Cree Trapper's Association for 11 years and has three children of his own. His parents were very overprotective of their grandchildren because they never had their own kids to raise.

"I always tell my children I love them," Dixon said. "I get pushed away because I want to kiss them, even if they're no longer kids. I want to make sure they feel loved like every child should."

Société d'énergie de la Baie James

Traffic disrupted between Matagami and the Eastmain-1 jobsite

Over a 45-day period, Blais et Langlois will be transporting pieces of steel armouring from Matagami to the Eastmain-1 jobsite. This will considerably disrupt traffic from January 17, 2005 to March 7, 2005. About fifteen trips are planned, which could each take up to three days to complete. Each trip will be divided into two parts: from Matagami to Kilometre 274 (intersection with the Route du Nord) and, the following day, from Kilometre 407 to the Eastmain-1 jobsite. On the James Bay highway, the convoy will stop every 30 minutes, and/or as needed, to allow traffic through. However, from the Route du Nord to the Eastmain-1 jobsite, vehicles will not be able to pass the convoy. Hydro-Québec Security will be making sure that everything goes smoothly, several kilometres ahead of the convoy.

Call, if you don't want to wait

A toll-free line is available to find out about the convoy's position.

For information, please call

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ᒋᑭ ᓂᑲᐱᔪᑦ ᒫᓴᑭᓄ ᐊᓂᑦ ᒪᑕᑭᒥ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐃᓱ ᐃᓱᒉᐃᑦ 1 ᐋ ᐋᐱᑎᓯᓇᓄᑦ

45 ᑎᒣᑐ ᒋᓱᑲᓐᒣ ᒋᑭ ᐱᒥᐱᔪᑦ, ᐊᓂᒋ ᐱᓗᐃ ᑭᔭ ᓚᒃᓗᐊ ᑲᑦᐱᓂ ᒋᑭ ᐅᑕᐸᐅᑦ ᐋ ᒥᔅᓱᔪᑦ ᐱᔭᐱᔅᑯᔪᑦ ᒫᓴᑭᓇᒣᑦ ᐊᓂᑕ ᑲ ᐃᑎᒧᔪᑦ ᒪᑕᑭᒥ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐃᓱ ᐃᓱᒉᐃᑦ 1 ᐋ ᐋᐱᑎᓯᓇᓄᑦ. ᓇᒃᑕᐸ ᒋᑭ ᐅᒃᑕᐱᔪᑦ ᐊᓂᑦ ᒫᓴᑭᓇᒣᑦ ᐋᐃ ᐱᒥᐱᓇᓄᑦ ᐃᑦᐱᑦ ᒋᔅᓱᑯᓂᐱᓯᑦ 17, 2005 ᐱᒃᐊᑦ ᒋᔅᓱᐱᓯᑦ 7, 2005. ᐃᔅᐊ 15 ᑎᒃᑕᑦ ᒋᑭ ᐱᒥᐱᓇᓄ, ᐊᑦ ᒪᑦ ᐸᔭᑲᑦ ᐋ ᐱᒥᐱᓇᓄᑦ, ᑲᓂᐊᑦ ᓂᒃᑐ ᒋᓱᑲᒃᒣ ᒋᑭ ᐃᒃᐱᓱ ᐱᒥᐱᓇᓄ. ᐊᑦ ᒪᑦ ᐸᔭᑲᑦ ᐋ ᐱᒥᐱᓇᓄᑦ, ᓂᔅᔭᑦ ᒋᑭ ᐃᓱᓇᑯᑦ ᐋ ᐱᒥᐱᓇᓄᑦ: ᐊᑦ ᓂᒃᑎᑦ ᒐ ᐱᒥᐱᓇᓄᑦ ᐊᓂᑦ ᐅᒃᑭ ᒪᑕᑭᒥ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐃᓱ 274 ᑲ ᐃᑎᓯᓇᑕᑦ ᐊᑦᑭᑦ ᐊᑦᑕᓯᑦ ᒪᑭᓇᒃᒣᑦ, ᒐᑦ ᒥᑦ ᐅᒃᑭ ᐊᓂᑦ 407 ᑲ ᐃᑎᓯᓇᑕᑦ ᐊᑦᑭᑦ ᐊᑦᑕᓯᑦ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐃᓱ ᐃᓱᒉᐃᑦ 1 ᐋ ᐋᐱᑎᓯᓇᓄᑦ. ᐊᓂᔅ ᒪᑦ ᒪᔅᑲᑦ ᐋ ᐱᒥᐱᔪᑦ ᐅᒋ ᑲ ᒥᓯᒋᒃᑎᑦ ᐅᑕᐸᓇᔅᑯᑦ, ᓂᒍᐃ ᒋᒋᒋ ᒥᔅᐅᒃᐊᓇᓄᐃᑦ. ᒋᑭ ᐃᒃᑕᐅᑦ ᒪᑦ ᓂᑲᓂᒃᒣᑦ ᒐ ᐅᒃᑭ ᓇᓇᒋᒃᑕᑦ ᒪᑭᓇᔪᑦ ᑭᔭ ᐅᑕᒃᒣᑦ ᒐ ᐅᒃᑭ ᓇᓇᒋᒃᑕᑦ ᒪᑭᓇᔪᑦ ᒃᐊᐃᑎᔾ ᑯᐯᑦ, ᐊᑦ ᒪᑦ ᓂᒥ ᒋᑭ ᐅᒃᑕᐱᔪᑦ ᒐᑲᔪᑦ.

Γ·ᑕᒃᑕᑦ. ᐋᑲ ᐃ ᐊᓯᓂᐊᓯᔭᑲ

ᒋᒋᒋ Γ·ᑕᒃᑕᓇᐊᑦ ᐊᑲ ᑎᐱᒃᐊᒧᒃᑎᑯᔭᑦ ᐊᑦ ᐊ ᐃᒃᐱᓱ ᐱᒥᐱᔪᑦ ᑲ ᓇᓂᒃᑲᒐᑦ ᐅᑕᐸᓇᔅᑯᑦ. ᐃ ᓂᑑᒋᒐᔪᒃᑎᒪᑲ. ᒪᐅᑕ ᒐ ᐃᓱ Γᑕᒃᑕᔭᑦ

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It's a Prison

Charles Esau's time in Horden Hall

Charles is now back in his hometown of Waskaganish. He is a public health officer helping people through their healing process.

Photo: Neil Diamond

By Ernest Webb

Charles Esau was a bewildered six-year-old boy standing in the auditorium. His parents had just taken him to Horden Hall in Moose Factory. It was 1962 and he was one among thousands who had gone through this bewildering welcome to a new world.

Many in his group were expecting the parents to stay as well. But when they closed the gate, that was it. The teachers explained the rules to the students who had just arrived. Some, like Charles, didn't know quite what to expect. Others had been there before and knew the drill.

"First thing, they get you in a big room, an auditorium, to tell you the rules," Charles recalls. "They tell you which chores need to be done. They tell you in a new language."

With a chuckle he adds, "Whenever they said 'students,' I thought they were going to give us hats. But after eight years you know what they're saying."

Then, of course, they would introduce the dreaded line-ups that would govern everything they did from that point on. "Line up here... Line up there. You have to line up for everything: going to church; you have to line up for your breakfast, lunch and dinner."

The dorms at Horden Hall were laid out with the beds in a row very much like a hospital or a mental institution. "Physically it's a prison," Charles observes. "Psychologically, you're being controlled."

Eat your words

The language misunderstandings would put kids in absurd situations, including moments of violence directed at them by someone supposed to be caring for them. The childen couldn't understand why this violence was directed at them.

"I heard of a boy who only knew two words in English, yes and no. They punished him for some reason. They strapped him on the hands. 'Did you do it?!?' 'Yes.' Bang! They hit him. 'Are you going to do it again?' 'Yes.' Bang! 'Have you had enough?' 'No.' So they hit him again."

The eating habits in residential school have an effect even many years later. "I have an eating disorder," Charles notes. "I can gobble up my food within a certain period of time without realizing it. I talked to my friend about it and he said the same thing. 'My wife is surprised by how much I eat but I don't even know I do that.' It's the regimented time we had to eat. We had to eat so much within a certain amount of time and you wanted to prevent others from taking your food."

Of course, being in a

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prison-like setting meant you had to have your wits about you. "I was more like the person who knew how to maneuver in there. I knew when to back down and how to get out of situations. It was more like survival. You stayed away from the bullies because if they ever got you the others would taunt you as well."

The bullies were a constant source of stress for many students. Charles remembers that he didn't want to draw any attention to himself through excellence.

> *"You know you're being watched all the time. Every little thing you did. Going back to that time traumatizes me."*

"I limited myself in things I did," he admits. "Like in sports or anything. And academically I limited my potential because of the teasing you would get: 'Ever think you are good. Ever think you are smart you.' You would get picked on. Then you avoided that. You didn't want to stick out more than anybody else."

Life within those long, dark walls wasn't easy and people found different ways to escape. One way was physically, some would be happy to get a sickness like tonsillitis so they would have to go to hospital and get to eat ice cream. Others found ways to get within themselves to escape.

Charles remembers himself as an "angry kid," he says. "But that anger was suppressed. It was internal and it would come out in different forms. One way was learning to play music. Music was one way we were healing during that period. That was the 60s, you know. Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, Beatles, Rolling Stones and a little bit of George Jones. That's how we coped. Music soothed our loneliness and fear. There was lots of fear. You know you're being watched all the time. Every little thing you did. Going back to that time traumatizes me. Knowing you were oppressed by another culture."

You're all Indians

One pastime they had included movies in the auditoriums. The westerns that portrayed the Indians as savages were the most common. The experience almost made them forget who they were. "In Grade 7 we had a Native teacher. He asked us who the good guys were in the movies and we all said 'Cowboys!' He replied, 'I have news for you: You're Indians, your skin is brown. Take a look.' We looked around and we suddenly noticed that we were brown."

It doesn't take much for Charles to be transported back to those days, he says. "Sometimes when I walk into a hospital certain smells, like cleaning fluid, bring me back. Or even a certain colour of green. Watching the movie The Green Mile I was reminded of residential school; you know, the green on the floor or the walls. It wasn't a pleasant memory for me, to put me back in that place. My friend told me about when he painted his walls at his house. He made the colours different from the lower and upper wall. He saw his daughter standing there barely taller than the bottom color then suddenly, boom! He had a sense of loneliness. We slingshot back and forth to that time with our memories."

Charles isn't the only one in his family to be affected by residential school. He has five brothers (though one has passed away) and three sisters. He is the oldest boy.

"We went to nine different residential schools," he says. "Three stayed home and never went to school. Even my dad went in the 30s and 40s. That's when they had a half day of work for them. You're uprooted from your own world, relocated from your culture and you feel like an outsider. Then you isolate yourself. That's how I was feeling all the time. I felt isolated from my own family because you don't feel close to your brothers and sisters, or your own parents. They weren't there to parent you. You longed for things. When I saw a family walk by with both parents I would wish that I was there."

Photo: Neil Diamond

Charles Esau

Finding Home

Just like a scene in a famous movie. Charles escaped Horden Hall through the window. He climbed through, jumped down and ran. He went to his parents' house, which was "down the train tracks in the bush."

Many of his friends were leaving the school because of transfers to the Fort George schools or were simply going home. He felt even more alone and didn't want to be left behind. That's when he made the decision to run. They didn't even bother looking for him.

"It was the 70s. Things were changing. Some schools were closing down," he observes.

Charles was 14 or 15 and coming home wasn't easy. It was like he met his sister for the first time. It was only then that they got to know each other.

Other issues would come up. "When you come

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Short Story Contest

NISKAMOON CORPORATION

Over the past few decades, traditional fishing and fish consumption has declined considerably. As a consequence, many Crees of this generation eat less fish than the generations of the past. As a part of keeping this tradition alive, we are proud to offer this short story contest, "Our Goal is to restore and strengthen Cree fisheries for Cree aspirations and needs." **Niskamoon Corporation** is proud to now publish the stories by Melanie Pachano, winner of the 2nd Place prize (12-18 age category) and Paul Shecapio, 2nd Place (18 and up category). Congratulations Melanie and Paul! Look for the first place winners in the next issue of *the Nation*.

Photo: Ernest Webb

Fish Story · (Ages 12 - 18) · Melanie Pachano.

2nd

I will tell a story about a fish. Cree people depend on fish for food both now and in the past. There is always fish to eat. Everyone can catch fish. Fish is good to eat. Fish does not cause people to gain weight and the fish entrails can also be eaten. Fish contains lots of nutrients to help the human heart. People did not gain weight in the past because fish was an important part of their diet. Gill fish nets were used to catch fish because they were easy to use for harvesting food and people also looked for other types of food while walking. It was easy for people to use the net for catching fish.

The elders used to say that the fish net is still hunting for you while you sleep at night. A person was sure s/he would get at least one fish in the net. Then there would be food to eat.

In the past fish was cooked in different ways and these ways are still in use today.

There were no frying pans in the old days so fish were not fried. The fish was boiled and the fish broth was good for drinking. Also, fish soup was made from this fish and broth.

Other ways of cooking fish nowadays are frying it, cooking it on a stick by the fire or hung on a rack over the fire. Dried fish could be kept for a long period.

Dried fish was also pounded for pemmican. Dried fish is pounded until powdered like flour. A rock was used to pound the fish with a flat rock underneath.

Any type of animal grease or fat is used to mix in the pemmican. The pemmican is eaten and is usually a favourite at feasts.

You used fish as bait when setting nightlines to catch fish. Sucker is often the kind of fish to use as bait on nightlines. Cod is also used as bait. One can catch many fish while fishing with a hook when using other kinds of fish for bait.

Short Story Contest

ᓂᒫᑦ ᑎᐸᒋᒍᓐ · (12 - 18 ᐊ ᐃᑦᐱᑎᓯᑦ) · ᒣᓚᓐ ᐹᒐᖕᐊᓄ

2nd

ᓇᒫᑦ ᓂᑭ ᑎᐸᒋᒫᓐ. ᓂᒫᑦᖕ ᐊᔪᑯᓐᖕ ᐊᑕᒋᖕᐅᑦ ᐃᔪᔪᑦ ᐊᓄᖕᑦ ᑭᔭ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐊᖕᑭᑦ. ᐊᑲ ᑕᐸᒋᖕᐅᑦᓄᓐ ᐊᓐ ᑲᑏ ᑕᐱᒋᖕᐊᑭᓄᑦ ᓂᒫᑦ. ᐊᖕᑦ ᒫᑦ ᒫᑲᑦ ᐱᖕ ᓂᒫᐱ ᑭ ᐊᐱᒋᖕᐊᑭᓄ ᐊᓂᑦ ᑯᑦᑎᔪᑦ. ᑯᑦᑎᔪ ᒋᑭ ᐱᒋᑦᑎᓇᓐ ᐊᓂᑦ ᑯᑦᑭᓂᖕᑦ. ᐊ ᑯᑦᑎᑦ ᐊᐊᓐ ᐊᑯᑦ ᑲᑏ ᐊᐱᒋᖕᐊᑦ ᐊᐊᓐ

Photo: Nation Archives

ᑭᐸ ᐊᑕᖕᑦ ᐅᖕᑲᓐ, ᒍᖕ ᑕᓐ ᓂᒫᑦ ᐊ ᒍᐊᑭᓄᑦ. ᒥᓯᐊ ᐊᐊᓐ ᑭᑭ ᓄᑎᒫᔅᑦ. ᓂᒫᑦ ᒥᔪᓯ ᐊ ᒍᐊᑭᓄᑦ. ᑕᐸ ᑕᖕᒍᐱᖕᑲᒫᓐ ᐊᓐ ᓂᒫᑦ ᑭᔭ ᐅᑎᒋᓂᖕ ᑭ ᒋᒋᓇᓄ. ᐊᑯᑦ ᒥᖕᑎ ᐊᑑᑯᑦ ᒫᑲᓐ ᐊᓂᑦ ᒫ ᐅᖕᒋ ᒥᔪᖕᑲᑯᑦ ᐊᐊᓐ ᐅᑕᖕᐃᖕᑦ. ᑕᐸ ᐅᖕᒋ ᑭᑕᖕᒋᐅᑦ ᐊᐊᓂᑭ ᒍᑦ ᐅᔅ ᓂᒫᑦ ᐊᑭ ᐅᖕᑕᒋᖕᐅᑦ. ᐃᖕᐃᐱ ᑭ ᐊᐱᒋᖕᐊᐅᑦ, ᐊᔪᑯᓐᖕ ᑲᑭ ᐊᖕᑕᔪᒫᑦ ᐊᐊᓐ ᐊᖕᐊᐱᒋᖕᐊᑦ ᑭᔭ ᒫᑦ ᑭ ᓇᓐᑎᐊᐱᒫᓐ ᐅᖕᑲᓐ ᒫ ᒍᐊᑦ ᒍᑦ ᐊᑭ ᐅᒋᖕᑦᓐᖕᑦ. ᐊᔪᑯᓐᖕ ᑲᑭ ᐊᖕᑭᖕᑯᑦ ᐊᐊᓐ ᐃᖕᐃᐱ ᐊᖕᐊᐱᒋᖕᐊᑦ.

ᒋᔅᔪᑦ ᑲᐃᔪᑦᖕ ᔭᐱᑦ ᐊ ᓂᑑᖕᐅᑦ ᐊᑦ ᒫᑲᑦ ᓂᐸᔭᓐ ᑲ ᒋᑯᒥᖕᐃᑦ ᓂᑎᖕᐃᐱ. ᔭᐱᑦ ᑭ ᑭᑦᒫᔅᖕᑐᑦ ᐊᑐᐃ ᐸᔪᑦ ᓂᒫᑦ ᒫ ᑭᑯᒍᐃᑦᖕ ᑲ ᓇᑎᖕᐃᐸᑦ. ᒫ ᑎᑯᓂᑦ ᒥᒋᒥᔪ ᒫ ᒥᒋᑦ.

ᐊᖕᑭᑦ ᐊᓂᑕ ᒫᒥᒫᑑᐃᑦ ᑭ ᐸᔪ ᑕᖕᒋ ᐅᖕᑲᓐ ᑭᔭᑦᑕᒋᖕᐅᓐ ᐊᖕᑭᑦ ᓂᒫᑦ. ᓂᒫᔅᐳᐃ ᑭ ᒥᓂᖕᑲᓐ ᑭᔭ ᑭ ᐃᑕᖕᐃᑲᓐ ᑭᔭ ᓂᒫᑦ ᐃᑕᖕᐃᑭᖕ ᑭ ᒋᒋᓇᓐ. ᒥᑲᑯᑑᔪ ᐊ ᑯᑦᑎᑦ. ᒥᖕᑎ ᒋᑭ ᒋᑲᒋᖕᑎᓇᐅᑦ ᓂᒫᓯᑦ ᐊᖕᐊᐱᒋᖕᐃᑦ ᑯᑎᑦ ᓂᒫᑦ ᐊᐃ ᐅᒋᑦᑲᒫᖕᐃᖕᑦ.

Photo: Nation Archives

Short Story Contest

Fresh Air, Fresh Water, Fresh Fish · (Ages 18 and up) · Paul Shecapio

2nd

I get up one morning and just follow what my heart desires. I look out towards the window and slowly make my way to the back door. My room and living room sure feel stuffy and full of dry air. I open the back door and take a step onto my balcony; I take a deep breath and could taste, feel and smell the clean fresh air. The sun is shining, and there is no wind. The lake looks very calm, not a ripple of a wave. It is like looking into a mirror. I look towards the bay and right at that instant, a fish jumps and shines and

Photo: Nation Archives

glitters right onto the morning sun. My heart starts pounding and I look at my boat and motor that's parked in my back yard. I take another deep breath to feel the cool refreshing taste of morning fresh air. From that moment, I decided to go fishing today.

I grab a note pad and scribble a note saying, "Gone fishing!" and leave it on the table. I pick up the

Photo: Nation Archives

phone and dial my office number and I leave a message saying that I was not going to be in today. I hurry to my shed and prepare my gas; paddles, life jacket and all my fishing gear together and place them into my boat. Once done, I head to the kitchen and pack my lunch, snacks, frying pan, a pound of lard, a baggy of flour, two spoonfuls of butter, place small pieces of plastic under the salt and pepper caps, a fork, a knife, spoons, teabags, a small pail, plate, cup, and throw them into my cooler. I search into the kitchen drawers for my filet knife and matches. I run back to the shed and grab my axe and grill for the fire I plan to build. Ooohh, my mind starts wondering off, "where am I going to fish this time?" I step into my car and turn the ignition on.

That moment, my mind goes back in time where it starts to think of my ancestors. I could picture two natives pushing off their canoe and paddling towards their net. How fresh the air was, how fresh the waters were, and how fresh and clean the fish was back then. Suddenly I feel a bump and snaps me of my mind wondering off. Ooops, a small dent on the bumper. I hitch it up and hurry down to the river.

I see the other natives backing the trailers of boats into the river. I rush too, and quickly park the car.

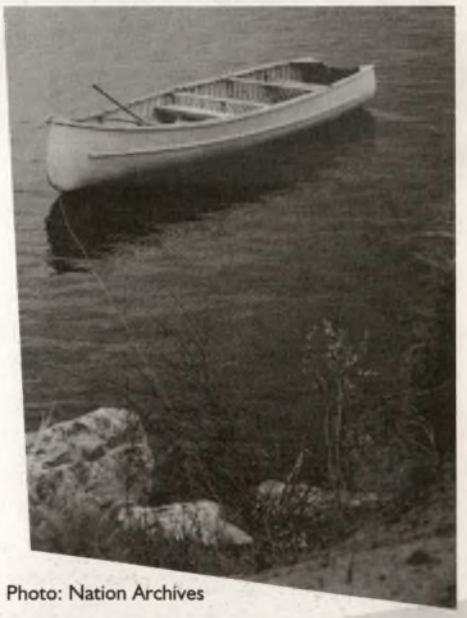

Photo: Nation Archives

One of the Crees yells at me "Where are you going?" and I reply back, "I am headed for fresh air, fresh water and I am gonna get me fresh fish." He shouts back, "Me too!" I wave back and shout back at them to have a nice day. I rev up the motor and give it full throttle. I think to myself,

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ᐊᑉ ᒥᔪᒋᓂᑲᒃ, ᐊᑉ ᐱᔭᖅᑭᖅ ᓂᐱ ᑭᔭ ᐊᑉ ᐅᔅᑎᓯᑦ ᓂᒪᔅ

(18 ᑭᔭ ᐃᖅᐱᒥᖅ ᐊᑉ ᐃᔅᐱᑎᓯᒃ) - ᐅᑦᑕᖅ ᖃᖅᑲᐯᓐ

ᐸᓗᒃᑲᓐ ᒋᔭᒋᓕᐸᔭᒃ, ᐊᓂᖅᑲᔭᖅ, ᒥᓐ ᐊᖅ ᐊ ᐃᖅᑎᔭᖅ ᐊ ᐃᖅᑎᔭᖅ. ᓯᔭᒋᐊᐱᔭᖅ ᐃᐃᑎᒥᖅ, ᐊᓐ ᐊ ᐊᑎ ᐃᐃᑲᐳᔭᖅ. ᔫᖅᑕᓚᖅ. ᒥᓐ ᑲ ᐃᐃᑲᐳᔭᖅ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐊᔅᑲᖅᑕᒥᖅ, ᓇᖅ ᐊ ᒥᔪᑕᖅᑎᒪᖅ. ᓇᖅ ᐊ ᐱᔭᖅᑭᖅ. ᓇᖅ ᐊ ᐱᔭᒋᖅᑲᖅᑎᐊᑦ ᐱᓯᒃ ᑭᔭ ᓇᖅᑏᒃ ᒋᒥᖅᑎᖅ. ᓇᖅ ᐊ ᐃᔭᖅᑎᓇᒋᒃ ᔅᑭᖅᐃᒋᖅ. ᒧᔭᒃ ᐊᐱᒋᓯᐃᓂᖅ ᐃᓂᓇᑯᖅ. ᐊᓂᑕ ᐊ ᐃᑕᐱᔭᖅ ᐊ ᔅᑎᐊᒋᒋᐅᒃ, ᒪᖅ ᐅᖅᒋ ᑯᒋᖅᑕᒃ ᓂᒪᔅ. ᒧᖅᑕᔭᖅ ᓂᑕᖅᐃ ᐊ ᐸᖅᐸᐊᒥᒋᖅ. ᑲᓂᐊᐱᖅᑎᒪᖅ ᓂᑑᑦ ᑭᔭ ᓂᐱᒥᐱᔪᒃ ᑲ ᐊᖅᑕᒃ ᐊᓂᑦ ᐃᖅᑕ ᓃᒋᖅ. ᐊᑯᑦ ᐊ ᐊᓂᐸᔪᖅᑎᒪᖅ ᒐ ᐃᖅᑎᔭᖅ. ᒐᒃ ᑲᑕᔪᖅᑎᒪᖅ ᒐ ᐅᒋᑲᒋᒐᔭᖅ ᐊᖅ ᑲᓂᑲᒃ.

ᒪᓯᓂᖅᐊᒪᖅ ᐊ ᐅᒋᑲᒋᒐᔭᖅ, ᓇᑭᑎᒪᖅ ᐊᖅ ᒥᓯᓂᖅᐃᑭᖅ ᐊᓂᑦ ᒋᒋᓯᓇᖅᑎᑯᖅ. ᒪᑉᑕᖅᑕᔭᖅ ᑭᔭ ᓂᒥᓯᓂᖅᐃᒐᐅᑭᒥᑯᖅ, ᐊᖅᑎᒪᖅ ᐊᑲᒃ ᒐ ᑎᑯᓂᓂᔭᖅ ᐊᓄᖅ. ᓇᖅ

Photo: Nation Archives

ᐊᑉ ᐃᔭᒋᔭᖅ ᐊᑉ ᐃᑐᖅᑕᔭᖅ ᓂᐊᖅᑲᖅᐃᑭᓂᓂᖅ, ᐸᖅᒋᐱᒪᔭᖅ,

Photo: Nation Archives

ᐊᑎᓂᑲᒃ ᐊᐳᐃᒃ, ᑲ ᐊᑯᖅᑎᒃ ᐊᑯᖅᑉ ᑭᔭ ᒥᓯᐊ ᓄᒋᑲᒋᑭᖅ ᐊᐱᒋᖅᑕᐃᖅ, ᐳᔅᑕᔭᖅ ᓂᑑᑎᖅ. ᒐᒃ ᒋᖅ ᐸᖅᑎᔭᖅ ᓂᒋᖅ, ᐊᖅᑎᒪᓯᔭᖅ ᓂᓂᒪᐃᖅ, ᐊᑎᓂᒪᖅ ᐸᓂᔅᒋᖅᑯ, ᐸᔭᑯᑦ ᐱᒥ, ᐊᐱᓱᖅ ᐱᖅᑲᓱᒋᓂᒃ, ᐊᐱᓱᖅ ᐱᑦ ᑭᔭ ᐊᔅᑲᔭᒋᑭᒪᖅ ᓱᐅᖅᑕᑭᖅ ᑭᔭ ᐸᐸᓐ, ᐊᑎᓂᒪᖅ ᑭᔭ ᒋᖅᑎᖅᐃᑭᖅ, ᒍᖅᑯᒪᖅ, ᐊᒥᖅᑲᓂᒃ, ᑎᓕᐱᔅ, ᐊᖅᒋᖅᑯᖅ, ᐅᔭᑭᖅ, ᒥᓂᖅᑲᑭᖅ, ᒥᓯᐊ ᐸᖅᑕᐊᐱᓂᒪᖅ ᒥᒋᒍᑎᖅ. ᐊᑎᓂᒪᖅ ᑭᔭ ᒍᖅᑯᒪᖅ ᑭᔭ ᒪᒋᓯᒃ. ᐊᑎᓂᒪᖅ ᑭᔭ ᓂᒋᑭᖅᐃᑭᖅ ᑭᔭ ᐊᖅ ᐊᐸᓇᐱᔅᒃ ᒐ ᐊᐱᒋᖅᑕᔭᖅ ᑯᑎᐊᔭᓇ. ᒐᒃ ᐊ ᐊᑎ ᒪᒥᖅᑐᓇᔅᖅᑎᒪᖅ ᑕᓂᑕ ᒐ ᐃᖅᒋᒪᔭᖅ ᒐ ᐅᒋᑲᒋᒐᔭᖅ. ᐳᓯᔭᖅ ᓄᑕᐸᓇᔅᑯᖅ, ᒐᖅᒋᐱᖅᐃᒃ.

ᐊᑯᑦ ᒪᒃ ᐊᓂᑦ ᒐᐊᒋᔅᒋᖅᑐᑲᒃ ᐊᖅᑭᒃ ᐃᔭᔪᒃ. ᓂᖅᑭ ᓂᐊᐱᒪᐅᒐ ᓃᓐ ᐃᔭᔪᒃ ᐊ ᐊᒧᑕᖅᑭᖅ ᐊ ᐊᑎ ᓇᑎᖅᐃᐸᒃ. ᑲᑕᔭᖅᑎᒪᖅ ᓇᖅ ᐊᒋ ᐱᔭᖅᑭᓂᑯᐱᓇ, ᑭᔭ

Photo: Nation Archives

ᓂᖅᑎᒃ ᓂᑭ ᐃ ᐅᑎᑎᖅᐊᖅ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐊᒋᑲᓯᒃ. ᓂᔭ ᓂᖅᑎᒃ ᓂᑭ ᐃ ᐅᒋᑲᒋᒐᖅ. ᒪᑲᒃ ᐸᒥᐱᔭᖅ, ᓇᖅᑏᒃ ᐃᔅᖅᑎᓇᑭᒍ. ᓇᐳᔭᖅ, ᒍᖅᑕᔭᖅ ᐊ ᐸᒋ ᔫᑎᖅ ᓂᑕᖅᑎᒥᖅᑯᒃ ᑭᔭ ᓂᖅᑎᑲᓂᐱᐊᖅ. ᐊᐅᑉ ᒪᒃ ᐅ ᐱᒪᑎᓯᐃᖅ, ᓂᑎᑕᔭᖅᑕᖅ. ᓇᖅᑏᒃ ᐊ ᒥᔭᑭᒥᒃ.

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this is a race to the secret spot. I got to get there first and throw the first cast. While riding on the mirror calm waters, I stand up to feel the wind in my face and let my hair loose and free. Aaahh, this is life man. Not a wave in the lake.

Just before getting to the narrows, a nice speckle trout jumps up and you could see its rainbow colors on it. I stop the boat, grab my tackle box and put a Williams' spoon onto my fishing pole. I quickly cast out near the spot it jumped and start reeling it slowly giving it that some small jerk motion every fourth turn. Suddenly the speckle trout jumps out of the water with the hook on its mouth. I could feel the excitement and my heart starts pounding fast. Ouch, you are going on my frying pan is the thought that runs through my mind. It starts fighting and jumping. It is not going to give up easily without a fight. As it jumps near the boat, I had my dip net ready beside me, and I quickly grab it and net the speckle trout.

The other boats pass by and I raise my fresh fish towards them. They wave back and I could hear their motors rev up more. I head to the shore and park my boat near a nice sandy beach. I grab my axe and rush to the woods for dry wood and dry bows. I place some stones in a circle and prepare the fire. Once before starting the fire, I go to my boat and clean the fresh fish. Instead of preparing as a filet, I cut it in half and gut it out. Then I go over to start the fire. I place the grill on top of it and then I prepare the batter for my fish. I put a tablespoon of butter on the heated pan and dip the fish into the batter. I watch the flames dance around the pan and listen to the wood crackle as the flames get bigger. I stand up and go over to my cooler to take my small pot out and fetch some fresh water from the lake. I grab my plate and other utensils and ingredients at the same time as I head back to the fire. I flip the fish over. I spread a cloth near the fire and place my cup, fork, spoon and knife onto it.

I look out onto the lake and my mind wonders off again. I wondered if the nemess was the only abundant source of food for our ancestors back then throughout the four seasons. I suddenly hear the sizzling of the frying fish in the pan and I snap out of it. Aaahh, it's ready. I take the fried fish out and place it on my plate. At the same time I place the pot of water and throw two tea bags in over the fire to boil. Then I sit down and get a piece of the fish into my mouth. How I savor the taste and just feel my mouth melt to this wonderful taste of fresh fish. Kind of makes your mouth watery, right. Once I was done the eating part of this trip, I headed back home and decided to work. This early morning trip revived me of my traditional Cree way of life.

Until next time take the moments to enjoy the fresh air, fresh waters and the fresh fish that are left in our Eeyou Istchee lakes and rivers.

Photo: Nation Archives

Short Story Contest

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ᐋᒻᒪᔭ ᐅᑎᑎᒃᑯᒪᖅ ᐊᑐ ᐊᐅᐸᓂᒃ, ᐅᔭᒥᒃ ᒪᓯᒪᑯᒃ ᐊᑐ ᐅᒃᒋ ᑯᒋᒃᑕᑦ, ᓈᖅᑐᒃ ᐊᑐ ᒥᔪᐊᑐᖅᑎᐊᑦ. ᒐᐱᒃᑎᓂᒪᖅ ᓂᐱᒥᐱᔨᒃ, ᐊᑎᓂᒪᖅ ᓄᒋᑲᒋᑭᓄᑦ, ᒐᑭᒍᒃᑕᔭᖅ ᐸᔨᒃ ᓄᒋᑲᒋᑭᓈᐱᒃ. ᔅᓗᖅ ᐊᓂᑕ ᓄᒋᑲᒋᒐᖅ ᑲ ᐊᐱᒥᒃ ᐊᑐ ᐅᒃᒋ ᑯᒋᒃᑕᑦ. ᐊᖅ ᒐᒃ ᐊᑐ ᐊᑎ ᐃᔅᑯᐱᒃᑕᔭᖅ ᓄᒋᑲᒋᑭᓈᔭᐱ, ᐊᔅᑯ ᐊᒋᐱᑎᒪᖅ. ᒐᒃ ᐊᒃᒋ ᑯᒋᒃᑕᑦ ᒪᓯᒪᑯᒃ ᐊᑐ ᐅᒋᑲᓯᑦ. ᓈᖅᑐᒃ ᐊᑐ ᒍᒋᒃᐃᑯᔭᖅ. ᒐᖅᑎᓈᖅ ᒋᑭ ᑎᑭᓯᖅ ᓂᐸᓂᔅᒋᒃᑯᒃᑦ, ᓂᑎᑕᐅᒃᑕᖅ. ᓈᖅᑐᒃ ᐊᑐ ᒪᖅᑯᐱᒃᐅᑦ ᑭᔭ ᐊᑐ ᐅᒃᒋ ᑯᒋᒃᑕᑦ ᒪᖅᒃ. ᒐᒃ ᐸᓗᒃ ᐊᑐ ᐃᒃᑕᑦ ᓂᑐᑎᒃᑦ, ᐊᑐ ᔭᔅᑯᓂᒃ ᓂᑲᐱᒃᑦᑐᖅ. ᒐᒃ ᐊᑐᒃ ᑲᐱᒃᐅᒃ ᐊᖅ ᒪᓯᒪᑯᒃ.

ᑯᑎᑭᒃ ᐃᔨᔫᒃ ᐸᒥᐱᔨᒃ ᐸᓗᒃ ᐊᑐ ᐃᒃᑕᐅᒃ, ᐃᔭᐱᒃᑏᑲᓐ ᓄᒋᑲᑕᑭᖅ. ᐱᔭᒋ ᐊᐊᖅᑎᒃᑯᒧᐃᒃ, ᐱᔭᒃᑎᒧᒃ ᑭᔭ ᐊᑎᑑ ᐊᑐ ᒋᓂᐱᒃᑕᒃ ᐅᐱᒥᐱᔨᒥᐊᓐ. ᓂᔭᑎᑲᒪᐱᔭᖅ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐊᑐ ᐊᒃᒐᔭᑯᒃ, ᑲᐸᔭᖅ, ᐊᑐ ᐃᔅᑯᐱᑎᒪᖅ ᓂᑐᑦ. ᐊᑎᓂᒪᖅ ᐱᑦᑭᒃᑭᐅᖅ, ᓈᑯᒃᑕᔭᖅ ᐸᖅᑕᐅᒃᑎᒃᑦ ᑭᔭ ᒥᔭᒃᐸᒃᑯᖅ. ᐊᖅᑕᔭᖅ ᓂᐱᒃᑯᑕᒃᒐᔭᖅ, ᑲᑎᐊᔭᖅ. ᒥᓐ ᑲ ᑯᑎᐊᔭᖅ, ᐸᖅᑭᓐᐊᔭᖅ. ᐸᑯᒐᓐᒃ. ᐊᐱᒃᑐ ᒥᔭᑎᓐᒃ. ᐸᒋᔅᑎᓂᒪᖅ ᐊᖅ ᐊᐊᐸᓈᐱᒃ ᐃᖅᑯᑕᒃᒃ, ᑎᔭᒋᖅᑕᔭᖅ ᓂᐸᓂᔅᒋᒃᑯᒃᑦ. ᐸᒋᔅᑎᓂᒃ ᐱᑦ ᐊᓂᑦ ᐸᓂᔅᒋᒃᑯᒃᒃ. ᐱᒃᑲᓂᑭᓂᒃᒃ ᐸᒋᔅᑎᓂᒃᒃ ᑭᔭ ᐊᖅ ᓂᒪᔅ. ᐃᔭᐱᒃᑎᒪᖅ ᐊᑐ ᑲᒃᑯᐊᐱᔅ ᐃᖅᑯᑕᒃ ᑭᔭ ᐱᔭᒃᑎᒪᖅ ᐊᑐ ᒥᒥᑦᑕᐊᔭᒋᒃᑕᔅ ᐃᖅᑯᑕᒃᒃ.

Photo: Nation Archives

ᐊᑎᓂᒪᔅ ᑭᔭ ᓂᑎᖅᒋᒃᑯᖅ, ᑲᐱᒐᔭᖅ. ᐊᑎᓂᒪᖅ ᑭᔭ ᓄᔭᑭᖅ, ᑭᔭ ᐊᖅ ᑯᑎᔅ ᒐᑲᖅ ᒐ ᐃᔭᐱᒋᒃᑕᔭᖅ. ᓂᔭᑎᒪᖅ ᓂᑎᖅᑕᒃᑯᖅ, ᑲᔭᒋᓂᔅ ᓂᓂᒪᓯᒃ. ᐊᑐ ᐃᑕᑭᖅᑕᔭᖅ ᐱᒍᔭᖅ ᐸᖅᑐᒃ ᐃᖅᑯᑕᒃᒃ, ᐸᒋᔅᑎᓂᒪᖅ ᓂᒥᓂᒃᑲᑭᖅ, ᓂᒋᖅᑎᐃᑭᖅ, ᓂᑕᒥᒃᑲᖅ ᑭᔭ ᓂᒍᒃᑯᒪᖅ.

ᒐᔅ ᒥᖅ ᐊᑐ ᐃᑕᐱᔭᖅ ᔅᑭᒃᐃᑭᓂᒃᒃ. ᒐᔅ ᐊᑐ ᐃᑕᔨᒃᑎᒪᖅ ᐊᓂᔭ ᐊᖅᑭᒃ ᐃᔨᔫᒃ ᒥᒃ ᓂᒪᔅᒃ ᐊᒋᒃ ᐊᔫᒋᒃᑐᒃ ᐊᔅᑭᓂᐳᖅᒃ. ᒐᔅ ᐱᔭᒃᑎᒪᖅ ᓯᔭᔅᑭᒃᑕᒃ ᓂᐱᒥᓂᐊᖅ. ᔅᓗᖅ ᑎᑭᓯᒃ. ᐊᑐ ᐊᑲᓂᒃ ᓂᓂᒪᓯᒃ, ᐸᒋᔅᑎᓂᒃ ᓄᔭᑭᓂᒃᒃ. ᒪᒃᒃ ᑭᔭ ᓂᐱᑭᖅᑎᐊᐊᐱᓈᖅ ᓃᓐ ᑏᓂᐱᔅ ᓂᑎᖅᒋᒃᑯᖅᒃᒃ ᒐ ᐅᒃᑕᒃ ᐃᖅᑯᑕᒃᒃ. ᒐᔅ ᐊᑐ ᐊᐱᔭᖅ ᒐ ᒥᒋᓯᔭᖅ. ᐊᑐ ᐊᑎ ᓯᔅᑭᒧᔭᖅ ᓂᒪᔅ, ᓈᖅᑐᒃ ᐊᑐ ᐃᒋᒃᑎᒃ. ᔅᓗᖅ ᓂᐱᐅᑯᓈᐊᑏᓂᒋ ᐱᖅᒃ ᐊᐊᓂᒋ. ᒥᓐ ᑲ ᒋᓂᒥᒋᓯᔭᖅ, ᒐᐊᐱᔭᖅ. ᒐᔅ ᐊᑐ ᐃᑕᐱᒃᑎᒪᖅ ᐊᑯᖅ ᒐ ᐊᐱᑎᓯᔭᖅ. ᐅ ᒪᔅ ᑲ ᐃᒃᑎᔭᖅ ᐊᖅ ᒋᔭᒋᔅᔭᖅ, ᐊᑯᑦ ᑲ ᐸᒋ ᒋᐊᐱᔅ ᐊᖅ ᐃᔨᔫ ᐊᓂᒐᔅ ᐃᒃᑐᐃᖅ.

ᐊᑐᔅ ᒪᔅ ᒋᐊᑦ ᑭᔭ ᒐᐃ ᐅᒋᑲᒋᒐᔭᑦ ᓈᖅᑐᒃ ᐊᑐ ᒥᔪᒋᓂᑲᒃ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐃᔨᔫ ᐊᔅᒋᒃᑎᒃ, ᐊᓂᑕ ᐊᖅᑦ ᒪᑲᒃ ᐸᔭᒃᑭᒃᑎᒃ ᒋᔅᑭᒃᐃᑭᓂᓄᒃ ᑭᔭ ᒋᓯᐱᒥᓄᒃ.

ᓂᖅᑎᒃ ᐊᑐ ᐃᒃᑎᑯᒃᒃ ᑎᐸᒋᒧᐃᖅᒃ ᒥᖅ ᒋᑭ ᒥᓯᓈᑕᒃ ᒥᖅ ᐃᒃᑎᑯᒃᑎ ᑯᑎᒃ ᑎᐸᒋᒍᓯᓂᒃᐃᑭᖅ.

Photo: Nation Archives

photo courtesy of
Chisasibi Cultural Department

Cree Residential School Task Force EMPHASIZED HEALING

By Will Nicholls

The Cree Task Force on Residential Schools, which issued its final report last fall, emphasized the need for Crees to deal with the continuing effects of residential schools. It came as no surprise that Crees, and indeed any First Nations peoples in Canada, must face the pain of the past. The task force, however, says the healing must be led by individual communities with help from a regional entity and coordinators.

According to Bill Namagoose, Executive Director of the Grand Council of the Crees, this central recommendation was developed because "that's where the victims are and the kind of support that they needed such as Elders and healing circles."

The task force recommends that healing circles be formed. Parenting programs should focus on Cree traditional education to provide holistic preparation for life. It is very important to bring back traditional ways of education. One would assume this would involve Elders. The task force also wants to bring non-traditional methods into the fight to negate the effects of residential schools. As part of healing, it was recommended that the Cree School Board retain the services of a writer to document a complete history on the residential schools and the negative impacts it has had on the Cree Nation. This information would then be incorporated into the CSB curriculum.

It would extend into home life as well. In order to help the youth have a better understanding of the effects of the residential school system, the Cree Nation must develop a comprehensive public education program. The parents must take the initiative to tell their children about the residential school system and what happened in those years as well.

Each community should find and hire healers, psychologists, social workers and other healthcare workers who are trained and experienced in dealing with post-traumatic stresses and disorders stemming from residential schools. The task force saw a need for trauma action programs to be developed immediately to help the youth.

> *Although there are many successes in the communities, there are still many dysfunctional families.*

It was recommended that the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay install a toll free crisis line to assist those survivors who need and seek professional counselling services.

"The Grand Council stands ready and willing to lead a legal and political effort where we think our strengths are the greatest," Namagoose said. "The healing part of residential schools should be at a local level where they have more expertise. We don't want anyone to wait for the Grand Council before finding ways to get healing."

Part of the political fight would probably include the recommendations that the federal government take full responsibility for the abuses that took place at residential schools. The task force said the government should make every effort to repair the damage done, including financial help in healing. One thing that may be more difficult to achieve is the demand for personal apologies from the federal government to each survivor of residential schools.

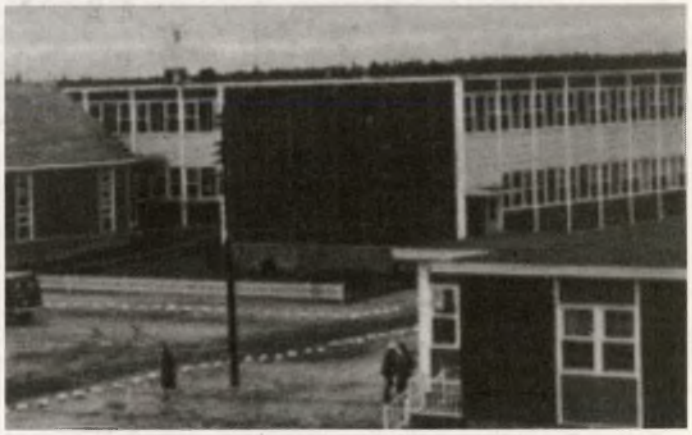
All the programs the task force is recommending will take a considerable amount of money. This may prove to be an easier task for the Grand Council given the new emphasis the government seems to be placing on settling residential school claims.

The Cree Task Force was advised that although there are many successes in the communities, there are still many dysfunctional families. The task force recommended that the Cree leadership make efforts to deal with the social problems that exist in the communities, immediately. In order to continue with the work at the community level, in areas of research and documentation, a regional coordinator and local coordinators for residential schools should be retained.

Finally, the task force said former students of residential schools who wish to pursue litigation on claims should file as a group, not as individuals. This may have been in reference to past years when individual claimants would settle out of court rather than going to the end of the legal process and creating a precedent.

Residential School Issues

by Norman Fireman



Fort George St. Philips Residential School 1965-66

*For this issue we look at how we can heal ourselves from the effects of residential school. **The Nation** interviewed some residential school survivors who attended different institutions in Quebec and Ontario.*

From Chisasibi, Irene House: We have to begin with the history of the residential school effects. We have to look at our past experiences and we have to go through that first. It's part of knowing who we are as individuals. If we don't look back, elders say it will always affect the next generation, even if they didn't experience it themselves. That's why we need to go back and learn the history. That's where we need to begin, in order to heal.

Charles Esau from Waskaganish: With my own personal view of healing from the residential school I began by exploring my own upbringing. The early childhood stage when I started to learn certain behaviors, my self-esteem was low. I had to learn to co-exist in a dormitory setting where other people could be bullies or bullied. The harsh disciplines used on us, I kind of passed that behavior on to my children. I saw that I was very angry and didn't express my emotions in a proper way. My anger got into rage where I hurt someone. Sometimes I wanted to hurt myself. By going into substance abuse and drinking the pain away, I would get violent. I brought that into my marriage.

Right now I'm patching those areas in my life by quitting drugs and booze.

Irene Bearskin, Sarah Bearskin, Nellie Bearskin with their mother Circa 1966-69

photo courtesy of Chisasibi Cultural Department

I realized I did a lot of damage in that area. So to begin the healing process we need to look at where it all began, there's always the seed of anger, where it came from. A lot of times we use that emotion to get our way in our lives. When we do that we hurt other people. When I came out of that I was very vindictive, I didn't know what I was doing because I was unable to look at the part of my life where I was really hurt. That's the part of my life where I have to re-learn and re-discover and uncover the blocked areas in my life then I am able to move and become better at what I do as a role model in my family, as a father and a helper to my own children. That's the part of the healing I would look at as a residential school survivor.

Nellie House of Chisasibi: As individuals we need to look at that part of our lives where we know it's very painful. I believe if we don't look back at the pain from the residential school effects we're always going to be stuck. If we confront it, we're facing the truth and the reality of it. The other thing too is you don't have to tell the whole world, you can confide in a trusted friend or to the Creator. We need to express and confront that in order for us to move ahead in our lives. But that's all in the individual level. One person may not be where I am or someone else may be ahead. We're all different and we have different ways of doing things. It is through spiritual and

continued on page 25

Actors wanted Actors wanted Actors wanted Actors wanted Actors wanted

Rezolution Pictures is looking for actors for the second season of Dab-Iyiyuu. Dab Iyiyuu is a show that visits Elders in their traditional activities and is featured on APTN. We need actors for the re-creations of the Elders stories. We will be shooting the re-creations between **Late March to Late May.**

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love where we will find the answers, and through compassion, through acceptance. We can also learn forgiveness if we only forgive others. That's where you'll find self love within you and the freedom to be whoever you want to be. I know it's a very delicate and sensitive issue and wherever there's fear, there's no room for love. It takes a while to go on that journey. We need to work with this issue with love, truth and honesty.

Waswanipi's Lily Sutherland: An individual has to be able to help or heal themselves before they can assist their families, community or nation. The people have to look at themselves first and how balanced they are before deciding to help their people. Many

Grade 2
Teacher Miss M. Garret-Reed

people are at different stages on their healing path and it's a lifetime process. As the saying goes, 'You have to know where you come from before you can go ahead.' We have to relearn our old ways of respecting, sharing, and loving ourselves as Cree people. We are more materialistic and that's totally opposite to being spiritual. We need to rebalance our lives and take care of our spirit. We require action from the C.R.A. to have a residential-school conference for the Cree region. If there is a conference, a report should be submitted to the Annual General Assembly.

Norman Cheezo of Eastmain: The first thing you have to do is admit that you have been abused. The reason why people abuse drugs and alcohol is because they want to forget the residential school abuse. I used to get strapped a lot back then, even just to speak my own language. I was something of a rebel. One time our teacher showed us a picture of a white guy and told us, 'This is your father, one of the people in the early days of confederation.' That moment I burst with laughter. I thought our fathers should look Native, not with long beards. I was sent to the principal's office and got a strap. Most people today still can't admit the abuse. They're still lost.

Myself, I started by going to the bush for two years. I think what gave me strength was just to be there where my forefathers lived off the land. So when you began the healing process, there are three steps you have to take. First are your body, then your mind and your spirit. Those three have to be in harmony in order to get well. Then I went to the sweat lodge to purify my spirit. The sweat lodge is a very powerful tool.

Today people are still afraid of the old taboos where people used to curse each other. They're afraid this will all come back. They don't know that if you live in harmony the way the Creator wanted you to do then nothing can harm you. So before you can heal other people, you must first heal yourself. If you want change, you must change from within. Then you go to the family; if you can heal the family. You then go to the community. The Cree way is the way; our language, our culture, we must know where we come from to walk on the right path.

Junior Hockey Team

Whapmagoostui's Matthew Mukash: Every person is affected differently from another person in cases of abuse. People need to come out and talk about the impact. There's also people who benefited from the residential schools as far as education goes. Some of them are really advanced in the Cree

Beginners
Teacher Miss K. Campbell

ways. Then there are those who need to come out and talk about how they looked at or faced abuse.

It's very important to take that first step to heal and to accept the negative impact, but there's always a solution for that. If you don't try to heal yourself the people close to you will be affected also. Some people who went to the residential schools, even if they don't drink or take drugs, become violent. They're emotional. Those kinds of things affect your immediate family and the people around you.

There's something called the welcome ceremony. I think all of the 10 communities should be integrated into that. It's important that they feel respected and have a sense of welcome back to the community.

It's important for everyone to know about this residential school issue. What it was and how it affected the whole Cree nation. What happened was, there was a policy to control children's lives, and one of the ways they found was to educate children the way they saw fit. And at the same time the schools were taking away the Cree values and not allowing the use of their Cree language.

It's important for everybody to understand the residential school system, why it happened and how it impacted the Cree society. This would be part of knowing where we can go in order to heal because all of us are affected by the residential school impact even if we don't know it.

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O-J Deputy Chief defends Cooper

Open Letter

This letter is in response to questions which have been raised recently regarding the eligibility of Mr. Gaston Cooper to have been elected, and to continue to serve, as Councillor in Ouje-Bougoumou.

Upon a review of all the facts and observations in relation to this matter, including discussions with the Ouje-Bougoumou Returning Officer, a review of the report from the Cree-Naskapi Commission, and an internal review of the traditional practices and by-laws of the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation, the Council has determined that, on balance, the community would be better served by Mr. Cooper continuing in the capacity of Councillor.

> "The Council has determined that, on balance, the community would be better served by Mr. Cooper continuing in the capacity of Councillor"

In arriving at this conclusion, the Council needed to carefully weigh many factors. The Council needed to consider the letter of the current Ouje-Bougoumou by-laws, the intent and status of certain administrative procedures over which the community has no control, the legal status of Ouje-Bougoumou by-laws, the status of various membership lists, certain assumptions about local membership practices and ongoing community stability.

Ouje-Bougoumou has for some time been a very complex political reality in view of the fact that it still has not been formally incorporated into the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. It is neither a "band" under the Indian Act nor a "band" under the Cree Naskapi Act. It has functioned for the most part according to its own traditional practices, authority, and jurisdiction. At the same time, recognizing that eventually it will assume self-governance powers under the Cree Naskapi Act, the community has adopted some of the practices described in the Act and has, to some extent, begun to function in the same manner as the other Cree communities.

To further complicate the matter, the community has attempted to register its local by-laws with the department of Indian Affairs in order to improve the enforcement function of local by-laws, only to have them returned to us with a refusal to recognize them. The community has, therefore, continued to function in an extremely ambiguous context involving traditional practices, contemporary by-laws developed locally and elements of the Cree Naskapi Act.

The current political situation which has been in place for a number of years is one which has contributed to a great deal of uncertainty in relation to issues which should be straightforward administrative procedures. Although the Ouje-Bougoumou Returning Officer has acknowledged possible errors prior to the last election in reviewing the electoral list based on the letter of one of the by-laws, such an error is certainly understandable in view of the overwhelming complexity of the overall situation.

> "Mr. Cooper's name is included in the list of founding members of Ouje-Bougoumou which appears in the Ouje-Bougoumou-Canada Agreement"

Further, Mr. Cooper's name is included in the list of founding members of Ouje-Bougoumou which appears in the Ouje-Bougoumou-Canada Agreement, the agreement signed with Canada in 1992 which led to the construction of the new village. As early as 1991, Mr. Cooper expressed his intention to become a member of the Ouje-Bougoumou community and he began, at that early date, the process for transferring bands from Waswanipi where he was registered.

Owing to the general ambiguity of Ouje-Bougoumou's legal status, the process for transferring bands is not straightforward. It certainly is not as clear as it is for other Cree communities. Because Ouje-Bougoumou is not legally constituted as a "band," the transfer from another band must be

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made indirectly through Mistissini. Therefore, the involvement of three communities is required. The possibilities for error are significantly increased with such a cumbersome and awkward procedural framework. It appears that, for reasons that had nothing to do with Mr. Cooper's efforts, his intentions, or his desire for an early transfer, the transfer was lost in an administrative quagmire for quite some time. In the meantime, although Mr. Cooper consistently referred to the transfer being in progress, the community has assumed that the transfer had been in effect. Mr. Cooper remained an active participant in the life of the community, and he was considered an Ouje-Bougoumou member in every sense of the term. In fact, the ambiguity has been so pervasive, Mr. Cooper's name has been on previous electoral lists and he has voted in previous elections. That the transfer process had gone awry was a surprise to most people in the community. It is unfortunate that the transfer took over 12 years, but it was officially completed in early 2004.

A careful reading of the report of the Cree Naskapi Commission supports the view that the entire Ouje-Bougoumou political situation is a very complex one, and one which is prone to having ambiguous circumstances arise. We agree with the Commission's conclusion that this context will only improve once the community is formally include in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and begins to govern itself in keeping with the Cree Naskapi Act.

The Ouje-Bougoumou Council believes that Mr. Cooper has made an important contribution while serving as Councillor and that it would not serve the community well to ask for his resignation. The potential instability to the functioning of the Council in the event of Mr. Cooper's departure would have a far greater negative impact than having him not continue to fulfill his elected mandate.

However, in view of the complexity of this issue the Council intends to bring this matter to an upcoming Community Assembly so that the Council can further explain its decision and to also permit the community members to ask for clarification and express their opinions.

The Council looks forward to having this matter behind it so that it can proceed to carry out its mandate from the people.

Sincerely yours,
Sophie H. Bosum
Deputy Chief

Anthony Hughboy

Applause for Hughboy

I think it's high time somebody spoke out about what's happening in our communities. I don't think this issue should be taken personally by anybody, and if they are taking it personally, then my question is what else is going on that we don't know about? If it's going to take somebody from the outside (he's married into the community) to say something, then I applaud Mr. Hughboy because he's doing it for the people and not for himself. People should learn to speak out more!

Judy Capissisit
Oujé-Bougoumou

Ouje-Bougoumou, politically challenged

I think that Tony Hughboy should be given a chance to run. He always makes good remarks. Sometimes it's good to have an outside person come in and make a difference. He did make a point about the expenses by the council members. Bringing their spouses all expenses paid. They're not going for a vacation, it's a business trip. I've seen it many times, too. Of course nothing will ever be done. When you are a concerned member, that makes you a trouble-maker. I am concerned too, about how much money is spent on the trips that the band council members use by having meetings in the city. I respect Gaston Cooper, he has a good heart and he cares about his people and the community. He is a good representative. Both Tony and Gaston are good people – they are concerned and care what happens in the community. I just don't understand the Ouje-Bougoumou policy. My home is Ouje-Bougoumou, but I felt so confused living there. I live in Montreal, now.

> "When you are a concerned member, that makes you a trouble-maker... Both Tony and Gaston are good people – they are concerned and care what happens in the community."

Olivia Couchees
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Healthy Living

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Many people in Eeyou Istchee have Diabetes, or know of someone who does. Quite often this can be someone they love. We know that healthier food choices are important, but let's face it, sometimes they can border on boring. Well, not anymore! Each issue of *the Nation* will feature a delicious meal that keeps in mind the importance of health maintenance but does not forget rich and hearty satisfaction.

Tasty Tortellini Pasta Salad

1 9 ounce package	refrigerated light cheese tortellini	280g
3 cups	broccoli florets	750ml
1 cup	sliced carrots (approx. 2 medium-sized carrots)	250ml
1/4 cup	sliced green onions	50ml
1 cup	chopped tomatoes	250ml
1 cup	fresh pea pods, halved	250ml
1/2 cup	bottled reduced-fat ranch salad dressing	125ml
2 tbsp	milk (optional)	30ml

1. In a large saucepan cook your pasta according to the package directions. Add your broccoli and carrots during the last three minutes of cooking, then drain. Rinse with cold water and drain again.

2. In a large bowl combine the cooked pasta mixture with your green onions, and then drizzle with the dressing. Gently toss the salad to coat. Cover and chill for 2 to 24 hours.

3. Before serving, gently stir tomato and pea pods into your pasta mixture. If you need to, stir in a little milk to moisten it up. Makes 8 servings.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION PER SERVING:

Calories: 145, Total fat: 5g, Saturated fat: 1g, Cholesterol: 17mg, Sodium: 344mg, Carbohydrates: 22g, Fibre: 3g, Protein: 6g

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back to your own world you have to catch up on the Cree language. I was asked to make some cooking sticks for the teepee but I stood in the bush not knowing what to do."

He eventually turned to alcohol. "I first tasted it after I ran away. We stole some wine. That's what I was for a long time: 'poor me.' Then eventually, 'poor me' became, 'Pour me another drink.'"

Then his life on the road started. He lived in the big cities like Montreal and Ottawa and different places in between.

"When you go home there's nothing really there," he says of his lost years. "You have to search for work down south. Maybe some summer jobs, but that was it. I was living the life of the migrant worker. You don't fit in any culture. When you are down south and you don't really fit into the mainstream culture because of discrimination or whatever. But when you come home you don't really fit in there also because of the language. You're trying to catch up on what you lost. They would remark that you spoke more English. 'Cheg whemschtuukshiiu uu?' (Which white man is this?)

"But if you were in the city you'd hear, 'Why don't you go home?' All this time I wondered where I lived."

Carrying the pain

Charles recognizes that dealing with the past is painful if it has been left alone. However, he says, "by going back to that memory it made me a stronger spiritual person by letting go of my emotions. For instance, a friend of mine committed suicide outside of the residential school when I was there. I didn't think much of it during the time I was there. You're told not to cry, don't say nothing, don't feel."

The grieving process came much later. "When I talked about it I started feeling shaky, your body starts quivering. Then it comes to your throat. Then you start crying. I realized I must have kept that memory in my body for a long time."

Charles turned to spirituality to help him cope with his pain. After 14 or 15 years of partying he decided he had enough.

"I had to clean my system of all the unwanted poisons in my life," he says. "I became happier. That was strongest awakening in my experience that I've ever had."

People also have to look within themselves to find their own way to heal themselves, Charles believes.

"A lot of blame goes in the wrong direction for what has happened in our life. One part is mending our own personal issues. You have to take care of yourself with your symptomatic behaviours: gambling, drinking and drugs. Eating is there too.

"You try to ease that memory. You don't want to go there. You resist it. If you don't deal with it then what you carry around gets very strong. It turns to rage, sadness, to fear. When you overcome that you become a stronger spiritual person. That's my understanding of what spiritual life is. You become stronger. You become kinder. You become a caring, loving person.

"It's also to be humble. Not to put yourself above or below everybody else but to understand people on an equal level. And not to push that spiritual knowledge and say, 'Hey, this is what I do. This is what you should do.'

"One thing I've done is to face my Creator and tell him what I've done in my life. I've asked him to forgive me for all I've done in my life. All the pain I've caused. All the pain I carried. I don't need to carry this anymore."

Finding the love

Charles spent his early adulthood in an emotional bubble, detached from any positive feelings. Instead, it was always negative: "anger, shame and guilt." He says he couldn't function outside of residential school because he hadn't learned to make his own decisions in the school's regimented atmosphere. Those inabilities lead to trouble with authority figures, including police and counselors.

"I didn't know that I was vindictive to my parents also," Charles admits. "I thought they abandoned or neglected me. But today I understand they tried to do the best with what they had."

Throughout it all, Charles' wife Ethel has remained steadfast. "There was bitterness in the family due to the alcohol. But she stood by me. She got me up when I was down. She forgave me for my shortcomings. We love each other and our connection is strong."

The little six-year-old boy who was left at the gates had to find himself again. "I had to learn how to laugh. I had to learn how to be me."

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BIRTHS – 100

We would like to sout out to Melissa Capissisit & Gabriel Shecapio Blacksmith on their safe arrival of their baby girl Abriel Rose Mary, born on January 25th, 2005 @ 3:16am. Congratulations to the both of ya's, and to Abriel's grandmother Kath, now you got a Grandaughter and Grandson?! How about that huh? Well Kid, now it is your turn to show the world you are capable of caring and loving your child. It is your turn to be a great mother, just like your mom and sister. So you guys do your thing and I'll do what I do best, spoil my friend's kids. (But I still got a lot of catching up to do). Have fun raising her, for she will be the Joy of every day. From, Vicky & Mitchell.

We would like to congratulate my sister Paulina Neacappo and her boyfriend Gabriel Bearskin on the birth of their baby girl..Kaylianna Ashlynn Gabriella Faith Neacappo, on Jan. 26, 2005 at 1:54pm. Paulina take good care of your little angel and enjoy every minute with her! Once again congratulations...From your sister & nieces..Melina, Hailie-Jade & Kaylee Loon (Mist).

BIRTHDAYS – 101

We would like to wish a very happy birthday to Ethan Blacksmith-Ottereyes who will be celebrating his first birthday on Feb. 9, 2004. Wow time has sure flown by fast. Seems like only yesterday when we first held you in our arms. You looked just like your big brother and still continue to look more and more like him everyday. Another little Ottereyes'sh! Once again Happy Birthday Baby! Much Love, Mom, Dad and Elliot.

Happy Birthday to Michele Georgekish on Feb. 5, and Maureen Matches on Feb. 12. If you get a cake make sure to give us pieces.....2 each..lol...jk.....With lots of love Lor and Josiah.

We would like to wish Roberta Hughboy a.k.a Bobita a Happy 4th Birthday. Wow you're growing up so fast and into such a beautiful girl. We can't wait to hear about your first day of school. We love you very much and hope your day is a blast. With lots of Love, Lora-Dee and Josiah. (kisses)

I would like to wish my son Matty Cowboy a happy 3rd birthday on February 24, 2005. Sorry kid, I won't be there for your birthday, but I sure will think of you while I will also blow out my candles. Anyways I love you and I really miss you so much. I will be home soon. Take care my son, love always, your mommy in Nicolet,Quebec.

My daughter Marisa Cowboy will be celebrating her 6 th birthday on March 5, 2005. I wish I could be there for your birthday but I will think of you. I miss you gurl and lub ya so berry much...from your mom all da way from Nicolet, Quebec. p.s. see ya soon and take care of Matty!!

We would like to wish Derland Shecapio on Feb.12, 2005, hope you have fun on ur birthday. From:your two girlfriends.....xoxox.

We would like to wish a Happy 15th Birthday to Valentina Tapaitic, on Febuary 12, 2005. Don't party too much on your birthday...lol...We're sorry for not being there on your birthday....Hope you have fun on your special day. From:Angela Jonah And Tamara Moar (Wask.)

Happy belated birthday to a young lady, Alayna-Star T. Ottereyes, on January 23, 2005. Enjoy your birthday gifts and we're sorry we couldn't be there for your feast. We sure did think about you! Come for a visit soon, so we can go to Starcite and watch a movie. We love and miss you very much. With love, Harry & Queenie Ottereyes (Hull) xoxox

Belated birthday wishes to my cuz Alayna-Star T. Ottereyes on Jan. 23, 2005. Hope you'll come down for a visit soon in Hull, so we could go skating on Rideau Canal. Hope you had a good day and wishing you many more birthdays to come. Love you and miss you very much. From your cuz Abel Ottereyes (all the way from Hull) xoxox.

We would like to wish a Happy Birthday to Christopher Ottereyes on January 27, 2005. Happy Birthday and many more to come! From Sophia and Tanishia.

I would like to wish my buddy Charlene Ottereyes a happy 18th birthday on January 27th, 2005. Don't party too much, or don't even, Lol....From your buddy Sophia and Tanishia.

We would like to say Happy 6th Birthday to my son Skyler Gull-Blacksmith on February 19, 2005. We Love you so much. From, Mom and Dad.

Happy 1st Birthday to Cyrus Ottereyes on February 5, 2005. We sure did think about you little guy. I'm sure you had a blast opening your gifts and eating your cake. Wishing you many more birthdays to come. We miss you and love you very much lil man. With love, Harry & Queenie (Hull) xoxoxo

Birthday wishes to my little cuz Cyrus Ottereyes on February 5, 2005. Don't eat too much of your cake, even if you like the icing. Have fun and happy 1st birthday! Love you and miss you little cuz. Love from your cuz, Abel Ottereyes (all the way from Hull) xoxoxo

Happy Birthday to my friend Charlotte Coonishish on Feb. 5/05. I hope you weren't hung over during work (jk). Have a special day my friend. I miss you, especially miss getting into trouble with you (lol). Once again, happy birthday! Love in Friendship, Queenie Ottereyes (Hull)

A special birthday greeting going out to my grandniece, Shalawna Georgia Angel Lameboy, whose birthday was on February 1st. I am so happy to see you reach your 1st birthday. You are such a cute and aborable little angel, I love you so much, again Happy belated Birthday. With lots of love & kisses, your grandauntie Barbs (Wask).

I wanna wish Happy birthday to my brother-in-law Ernest Blueboy on Feb. 4th (Wask). Hope you at least had a birthday cake. Again, happy belated birthday. From your sis-in-law Barbs (wask).

Birthday Greetings going out to my nephew Jeremy Jim Rod Hester (Wask- Feb. 19) Hope you will have fun on your birthday, and get what you wish for. Hope ur not planning on drinking away on your special day, Love Ya My nephew. With lots of love your auntie Barbs (Wask).

Another special little girl is celebrating her first birthday, Trinity Emma Grace Shecapio, on Feb. 4th in Waskaganish. Thanks for inviting me to your celebration, had fun and you look like you had fun too. Love ya, from Barbara (Wask).

I remember you had straight hair once, six years ago, but now we call you curley-girly because of your impossible hair. Happy 6th Birthday RoseMary! From daddy (Sonny) and mommy and Bentley big boy.

Happy Birthday to my mommy on February 16th. I love you so much mom...from, Faith C. Gilpin.

I want to wish a happy 18th birthday to Alice Pepabano on February 26, 2005. Happy 18th Birthday Alice and many more to come. From Sharon, Philip, Josephine and Tyler Matoush.

I would like to wish a bewy happy booday to my mommy Candace Danny-Look..hahaha..I mean Danyluk on February 15th. Well yeah, she's getting older and older..hehe. We also wanted to say that we lub you very bewy much!! P.S don't party too much mommy. Ahh, just kidding, you know me..sometimes i act crazy, so yeah. Love: your daughters Tassa Wassa, Wawii the hot chick. haha.. oh yeah and cheryl..XxX.

Birthday Greetings going out to my Best friend Sebastian Bearskin. (March 5/05). Here's a little something for ya. "Wake up with a smile and go after LIFE....Live it, Enjoy it, Taste it, Smell it, FEEL IT!" Luv, RaYcH...

We want to wish a Happy 3rd Birthday to our grandson, nephew, Seth Mathew Rich Nabinacaboo, and Happy Birthday to a brother, brother-in-law, and uncle Michael Nabinacaboo on February 28, 2005. Hope you guys have wonderful days on your birthdays. We love you both. Have a nice day. From; Gilles, Christina, Roger, Allan, Christian, Mary and Josephine, in Kawawachikamach.

Happy 3rd Birthday to our little boy Seth Mathew Rich Nabinacaboo. We wish you all the best. I hope you don't cry on your big day. We love you with all our hearts and souls. Lots of love from Mom, Karen Rich, your Daddy, Noah Nabinacaboo and your big bro Stanley Nabinacaboo Happy Birthday to you, From Kawawachikamach.

We would like to wish our daughter, Faith Gertina Moses, a very Happy 8th Birthday, on Frbruary 15th, in Eastmain. I hope you have fun on your day. We wish you all the best in this new year. Happy Birthday Faith'sh!! We love you!! Love, Mom, Dad xoxoxoxoxo.

Happy belated Birthday to my Dad, Ronnie Icebound, from Waswanipi, on January 15th, 2005. Happy 78th Birthday, Dad. Hope you enjoyed your day in the bush. Mom told me you were in the bush on your birthday. I,m so glad that you're still strong for trapping and hunting, but I wonder sometimes when you are going to retire from I.S.P. You have to, Dad, one of these days, cause you're getting older. Anyway, your 2 gandsons are sending birthday greetings, too. Hugs and kisses are coming your way. Happy Birthday Joomshoom. We miss you and love you very much. From Redfern and Eaven. I love you Dad, don't ever forget that. P.S. Take care, and see you soon. With lots of love, Lorraine and Claude.

Happy Birthday to my wonderful Mom,

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CLASSIFIEDS

Jane Icebound from Waswanipi, on Feb. 13th, 2005. Wow Mom, you're 68 years old. I would like to mention this to the whole Cree Nation, how loving and caring you are. I miss being around you, my friend, my Mom. I thank the Creator, Our Only God, for you. You've been so good to me and my sons. I thank you in so many ways. I love you Mom. You've done so much, that only you could do. And you, my Mom, you mean so much more than words could ever say. And again, Happy Birthday to you. Your Birthday is always remembered, because of who you are. You are a special Mom. I appreciate you. I admire you, and especially, I miss you and love you very much. Hope to see you soon, I mean very soon. With love, your daughter, Lorraine, and Claude.

Happy Birthday to our Grandparents, our Gandpa Ronnie Icebound from Waswanipi, Happy belated birthday on Jan. 15th, 2005. Is it o.k. to mention your big numbers in the Nation, 78 years old, Joomsham, Oops! And to our Grandma, Jane Icebound, on Feb. 13th, 2005. Happy Birthday Grandma. We wish you both the very best. P.S. Take care of each other. We love you very much. With lots of love, your Grandsons in Ouje-Bougoumou, Redfern and Eaven.

Happy birthday to my sister, Lily Anna (Sabeth), from Ouje, on Feb. 9th, 2005. Wishing you the very best in life. Have a wonderful birthday, you deserve one. Love, your sister, Lorraine.

I would like to wish a Happy Birthday to 2 very special people, who were both born on the same day, but with very many years apart, on Feb. 20th. To my God-son, Bryton Marshall, who will be turning 3, and to my friend Kathleen Capissisit, who will be turning?? I forgot?! Have a Happy Birthday you guys, and many more to come. Hope you two have fun, and with lots of cake and gifts to you Boych. And as for you Kath's, hope we all have fun as we celebrate your birthday. For you have shown us how great of a person you are in spirit and mortal, and that at any age you can still have fun. And I admire the ways you are in person, for you are a strong woman. Thank you for being our friend, through good and tough times, by sheltering us, guiding us, and loving us. This is what a true friend does, and only she knows. Happy Birthday Guys. Love ya's. From, Vicky & Mitchell.

We would like to wish a Happy 1st belated Birthday... to our son Hunter Mianscum. He turned the big 1 on Jan. 4, 2005. Oh what can we say, he brought us so much joy and love. He's the best.. We love him so much.... Luv u Boy!! Luv always, Mommy, Daddy, Abby & Roxanne.

I would like to wish my lil niece a happy 7th birthday on the 8th of february her name is Alanna-Faith Lameboy happy birthday girl & many more.....from your auntiesh hey can\'t spell my name i'm sure you know me.

Happy 8th birthday to Iskuess.Uniam on Febuary 10,2005. From:Mom,Dad,Tristan-James & Alyssa-Marie Uniam. We love you Iskuess.

This 1 is going out 2 my special babygurl Julianne (Jew) Mary Mercedes Mark whose birthday as on January 26th, 2005. I so wanted 2 B with U on your special day babygurl but I\'ll make it up 2 U somehow. U made me cry on the phone when U told me that U were waiting 4 me 2 come C! I love you forever and for always! "Julianne, my Joy` You're getting too big to hold so, I fold my hands in prayer and ask God to bless and surround you with all the love you so deserve. God be blessing you today and forever! All my love: Shannon!

Happy Birthday Brendidge on Feb. 3, 2005. From your buddy Raych.

We would like to a Happy Belated Birthday to "moojoo Ernest" on Feb. 4,2005. Happy Birthday to you Moojoo may your day be as special as you are. We Love you so much! From your Grand-daughter's Anisha & Nichelle Jacob.

Someone very special in my life will be celebrating his Birthday on February 9,2005. I would like to take this time to send Him Special Birthday Greetings to my Dad, Isaac. Dad, All my life you've always been there, Helping, Advising and showing you care. And all of my life I'll always be glad to have someone as special as you for my Dad. Thanks Dad for always being there for me. Have A very Happy Birthday, With Love always your Daughter Francine Jacob.(wask.).

Happy 20th birthday to my son Shawn Tomatuk(jasmo) on Feb 5 I would just like to let you know that you are very special to me. We have come a long way through good and bad times and i wish you well, You have helped me alot through my trouble times, You mean the world to me with love always, MOM.

I would like to say Happy 20th Birthday to a special person, my Shawn Tomatuk on Feb. 5, so Happy Birthday bro, I want this day to be yours for all the things you id for me, and I thank you for that. I'll always remember what u did for me – all the good things. I lab u. From ur big sis, Brandy-Lee Abraham. P.S Visit more often. We miss u at home.....K

We would like to wish our daughter Courtney Voyageur a very Happy Birthday on February 25. This would be her 1st birthday, we just wanna let her know that we love her very much and she means the world to us. She's daddy's girl and mommy's joy. love Blazo & Jennifer and from ur 2 brothers Tristan & Brandon (ur protectors from all the boys).

We would to wish a Happy Birthday to my Dad/Grandpa Gordon Neacappo on February 11, 2005. Happy Birthday and many more to come...We love you and we miss so much...Come visit us soon!!! From your daughter Melina & Granddaughters Hailie-Jade & Kaylee Loon.

PERSONAL – 300

'Big Bird' in Chisasibi. I am not sure you remember me, but we met online back in 1997. You referred youself to Louis Anderson. We exchanged emails and friendship, but we never met. Suddenly, you stopped responding. I never knew why, I thought that maybe it was something I said or did, but not long ago, I read your story in The Nation titled 'I remember, Part 1: October of 1998'. It was then that I knew your real name is Louis Neacappo...I knew you were the 'Big Bird' I once knew! I am not sure what I referred myself to, but I used to own the email Wabaguin@hotmail.com (which does not exist anymore) while we were still friends. I am also from OJ. If you remember me, please respond in the Nation and let me know, because I miss the friendship we once had. Peace, from 'Wabaguin' in OJ.

I would like to say Happy Valentine's Day to Flora Mark and Danny Happyjack. And Happy Birthday to Flora. I don't know exactly when, but I know your birthday is this month. I miss you guys. Well, take care. Hope I see you guys soon. When I come to Val d'Or, I'll give you a call. Bye.

This is to a wonderful guy that I met. I want to say that I love him very much with all my heart. I want the whole world to know how much I love him. So this is for you my love, I love you with my whole heart, and I miss you alot, and I can't wait for you to be my side, my heart is aching for you. I really need you by my side. I'll wait as long as you want me to. I know that you feel the same, cause you tell me how you feel. I'm very happy to hear you say those words,"I LOVE YOU SO MUCH". And I know that you will wait for me too. As the days go by "I love you" more everyday. I could say those words a millions times, "I love you", So this is for you my love, from your love.

Happy Valentines day to my parents Daniel and Josephine Martinhunter in Chisasibi. I love u both so much and thank u for always being there for me when I need u even dough I'm a big girl now. I miss u both so much I'll try to come visit soon. From your daughter Lillian (Mist.).

Hello my name is Clayton Brascoupe, i went to school in Ottawa some time around 1969-70. There were a number of Cree from Fort George in Ottawa then. I chumed around with James Bobbish? I say hello to all of you. If he is still around tell him I say hello. I am living here in New Mexico U.S.A. I am looking for information on traditional hunting. We are teaching our young kids the ethics of hunting and the traditional songs for hunting. I hope you may be able to help us. I also have been teaching traditional bow making, and hunting with these traditional weapons. Take care and thank you. If I can I'll try to remember some other names.

I would like to wish a Happy Valentines day to my Boo. You've given me unconditional love and the most wonderful child. I wish i could show you how much i love you but nothing in this world could compare. I will always be there for you (promise). Love and Kisses your Girl.

Happy 1st Valentine's Day to a sweet lil' boy. To our son Kasen Jerome William ..Boy! You're growing up soo fast, next month is your birthday!!..We Luv you so much...huggs and lots of love. Love always: Mommy and Daddy.

I would like to wish a Happy Valentine's Day to my husband, Benjamin Loon & to my beautiful girls, Hailie-Jade & Kaylee Loon....Happy Valentine's Day and I love you all sooo much. From your wife/mom...Melina.

We would like to wish a happy Valentine's day to Gabriel, Samantha, rifona, Katie and Kaylianna Neacappo...and to my Brothers & Sisters...from Melina,Hailie-Jade and Kaylee Loon.

We would like to wish our Grandparents..A Happy Valentine's day...Gloria & Gordon Neacappo & to Laurie & Jean-Baptiste Loon....With love always from our Granddaughters..Hailie-Jade & Kaylee Loon.

I would like to wish Happy Valentine's Day to these following people, my Dad and his girlfriend Sandra Dixon, with my lil sister Tiffany, Happy Valentine's Day to my 2 brothers Nick & Terry Bosum..Oh and I would like to say hi to my 2 lil cousins Nicole and Sarah Cooper. I hope u girls are doing juss ok..I miss u girls so much..Henry & Margo Happy Valentine's day..well take care everyone...Love you ALLL....Love always Trista Darlyna Bosum....Oh and another thing, hi 2 Gloria Happyjack and Patricia Wapachee Happy Valentine's Day Girls!!!

Happy Valentine`s Day to my husband Stanley Gull, and my children Josie-Ann, Jacey-Leigh Otter and our son Jouney Gull, I love you, you light up my life and you will always be in my heart. You belong in my heart, in my heart you will always stay. You are my everything. I will never do things just to hurt you. I will always be there for you when you need a shoulder to cry on. Everyday of my life you will bring so much happiness and joy. On Feb. 14, 2005, we will celebrate the joy of love. We will be hugging, kissing, loving all day!! Love, Mommy, Rebecca O. Gull

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The Last Line

Of knights, dragons and their slayers

by Ndiamon

Do you want to make enemies real fast? Are you so arrogant as to think you're important enough to have enemies? If so, do what many others before you have done: join the hordes of professional good spellers who call themselves journalists. Or take an even quicker route – run for political office.

Yes, if successful, you'll enjoy a brief and passionate honeymoon with your constituents, kissing babies, cutting ribbons, championing noble causes, fighting for the common man and basking in the stimulating company and scintillating conversation of nubile political groupies. These are the fun, easy tasks that are a part of a victorious campaign. Enjoy them while you can though, because within months into your term, the very people who voted you in can and will turn into hideous, demanding, and endlessly nagging shrews.

Take the case of Waswanipi's Chief Boy Wonder, Master Robert Cuisine. The first signs of a waning honeymoon appeared recently when several residents circulated a petition calling for – nay, demanding – his removal from the chiefly throne.

The reasons these petitioners demanded a new election included the usual accusations of financial mismanagement, resulting in band employees being laid off. Then there was the still popular but now clichéd charge that yet another leader was not answering to the people. Finally, and somewhat bizarrely methinks, there is alleged gross negligence in the area of garbage and snow removal.

Wisely, the Chief and his council promptly scheduled a special community assembly right around the time a hockey tournament was to take place out of town. Even better, the timing coincidentally coincided with the delivery of welfare and pay cheques, which usually trigger a frenzied exodus to surrounding bars and shopping malls. Shockingly, only 150 concerned citizens showed up at the meeting, thus failing to meet the required quorum of about 600 voting subjects. So ended Chief Kitchen's first quarrel with his once loving and supportive community, his once blushing bride, if you will. No doubt, this will not be the last night in the political dog house Kitchen will have to endure. Meeeeow…Whiiitiiiisshhh!

Political honeymoons can stretch over longer periods with vows of renewed election after election. Usually it takes a major indiscretion on the part of one member of the unit to send their blessed union into a tailspin.

Hey, I'm not a fairy but I've always liked those tales.

Which brings us to the sad-but-entertaining tale of one former chief, the once gallant and, one hopes, chivalrous George Wapachee of Nemaska.

For years, times were happy and gay for George, ensconced in his Castle Nemaska, lord of all he surveyed. Birds sang their sweet songs, caribou pranced through his forests, plump young virgins danced gaily around his tepee poles, his peasants feasted merrily on fat spring geese, the very stars themselves twinkled above his night sky, the northern lights danced for him alone and his kingdom was celebrated and enjoyed great renown across the land. Once in a while other suitors, clad in rusty armour and all unworthy, dared challenge his reign. With a proud and majestic thrust of his royal lance he unhorsed all as his lady fair Dame Nemaska swooned.

That is, until that one dark day when he pledged allegiance and surrendered all his kingly lands and rivers to a greater, mightier emperor to the north, one King Moses. His fair Dame Nemaska at once began to see not a proud dragon-slaying knight in shining armour but a mere vassal to a greater ruler than he. King George's beloved conspired against him and his bejewelled throne trembled.

A brave young knight, Sir Jimiken, Josie the Good, saw this weakness and issued a challenge, a joust to decide once and for all the destiny of George's realm. The two brave knights met on the battle field, exchanged gentlemanly pleasantries, retreated and charged. Hoof beats and a mighty violent clang rang throughout the kingdom.

The king's court aaahhed and probably ooohed before the dust finally settled, revealing the young knight Jimiken still sitting astride his white horse while his once mighty king lay underfoot, unhorsed and defeated. A great cheer echoed out throughout the land. The King is dead, long live the King! The new hero married the maiden and will, barring sloppy accountants or tardy snowplows, live happily ever after.

Hey, I'm not a fairy but I've always liked those tales. And that brings us, finally, to the point of our silly literary saga…

It was not so very long ago that our people emerged from the dark ages, a time when they were afraid to question their leaders and make them accountable for their actions. Since then, many a "benevolent dictator" has fallen thanks to the courage of people like the 10 whom, rightly or wrongly, signed that Waswanipi petition.

Hmmm… I wonder how that change in the Cree Nation came about. I wonder… could it have been those hordes of merry scribblers giving voice to an emerging democracy? A feast for thought, that is…

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